

**Charles
Bettelheim**

**Class
Struggles
in the
USSR**



Second Period: 1923-1930

[Section 2 -- Part 2]

NOTE: *The translation of this book into English has given the author the opportunity to check a number of his references and, as a result, to revise parts of the text.*

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Key to abbreviations, initials, and Russian words used in the text

Artel	A particular form of producers' cooperative
Cadet party	The Constitutional Democratic Party
CLD	See STO
Cheka	Extraordinary Commission (political police)
Glavk	One of the chief directorates in the Supreme Council of the National Economy or in a people's commissariat
Gosplan	State Planning Commission
GPU	State Political Administration (political police)
Kulak	A rich peasant, often involved in capitalist activities of one kind or another, such as hiring out agricultural machinery, trade, moneylending, etc.
Mir	The village community
Narkomtrud	People's Commissariat of Labor
NEP	New Economic Policy
NKhSSSRv	National Economy of the USSR in (a certain year or period)
NKVD	People's Commissariat of Internal Affairs
OGPU	Unified State Political Administration (political police)
Orgburo	Organization Bureau of the Bolshevik Party
Politburo	Political Bureau of the Bolshevik Party
Rabfak	Workers' Faculty
Rabkrin	See RKI
RCP(B)	Russian Communist Party (Bolshevik): official

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	name of the Bolshevik Party, adopted by the Seventh Party Congress in March 1918
RKI	Workers' and Peasants' Inspection
RSDLP	Russian Social Democratic Labor Party
RSDLP(B)	Russian Social Democratic Labor Party

	(Bolshevik)
RSFSR	Russian Socialist Federal Soviet Republic
Skhod	General assembly of a village
Sovkhoz	State farm
Sovnarkhoz	Regional Economic Council
Sovnarkom	Council of People's Commissars
SR	Socialist Revolutionary
STO	Council of Labor and Defense
Uchraspred	Department in the Bolshevik Party responsible for registering the members and assigning them to different tasks
Uyezd	County
Volost	Rural district
VSNKh	Supreme Economic Council
VTsIK	All-Russia Central Executive Committee (organ derived from the Congress of soviets)
Zemstvo	Administrative body in country areas before the Revolution

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Part 2

The village during the NEP period. Differentiation and class struggles. Agricultural policy and transformation of social relations in agriculture

The analyses offered in the following pages relate to the economic and social structure of the Soviet countryside toward the end of the NEP. Their purpose is to throw light on the conditions governing the articulation of class relations and class struggles in the villages with agricultural policy and to show how these relations and struggles led to the final crisis of the NEP.

It was the articulation of class struggles with agricultural policy that determined the changes which the Soviet countryside underwent between 1924 and 1929. These changes cannot be seen as an "autonomous process," dominated exclusively by some ineluctable "internal necessity." They cannot be divorced from the *policy followed* toward the peasantry and its various strata. In its turn, this policy needs to be related to the development of the contradictions within the urban sector and the way with which these were dealt -- problems that will be considered later.

1. The social conditions of immediate production during the NEP period

During the NEP^[1] the bulk of agricultural production was due essentially to the activity of peasants working on their own *individual farms*. These produced partly for the peasants' own needs and partly in order to exchange the peasants' products on the market. The state farms and *kolkhozes* played only a minor role. The number of peasants and craftsmen engaged in collective forms of production was only 1.3 percent of the total in 1924 and 2.9 percent in 1928.

[2]

Commodity production of grain (the branch of production that was of decisive importance for relations between town and country and in connection with the crisis that began at the end of 1927) was contributed mainly by the individual peasant farms: in 1927 they provided 92.4 percent, while the *sovkhozes* provided only 5.7 percent and the *kolkhozes* 1.9 percent.^[3]

I. Remarks on the social differentiation of the peasantry

The "individual peasant farms" constituted a heterogeneous "social category." Hidden behind this expression was the great complexity of production relations characteristic of agriculture in the NEP period. To this complexity corresponded the social differentiation of the Soviet peasantry and the class contradictions which resulted.

(a) The specific features of the differentiation among the peasantry during the NEP period

Social differentiation among the Soviet peasantry was still relatively limited toward the end of the NEP period. On the one hand, the division of the land realized thanks to the October Revolution (which was in some cases still going on so late as 1923-1924) had resulted in its more equal distribution. On the other, the process of social differentiation which developed during the NEP period possessed *special features* which have often been pointed out. This process resulted in a reduction in the proportion of poor peasants in the total peasant population and an increase in the proportion of middle peasants, while the economic importance of the kulaks grew only slightly.

The slow transformation of the structure of the Soviet peasantry was based mainly on a *twofold process affecting the poor peasants*, whereas one section of them joined the proletariat, another entered the ranks of the middle peasantry and strengthened this stratum.^[4]

From 1925 on the specific character of this differentiation was demonstrated by

investigations sponsored by Rabkrin, by the Commissariat of Finance, and by other administrative bodies.^[5] These investigations refuted the claims of the Left opposition which alleged that Soviet agriculture was undergoing a process of capitalist differentiation leading to *polarization*, with the *proletariat* being strengthened at one end, and the *rural bourgeoisie* at the other.

The theses put before the Fifteenth Party Congress explicitly recognized these distinctive features:

The peculiarities of that differentiation are a result of the altered social conditions. These peculiarities consist in the fact that, in contradiction to the capitalist type of development, which is expressed in the weakening of the middle peasantry, while the two extremes (the poor and the rich farmers) grow, in our country it is the reverse. We have a process of strengthening the middle peasant group, accompanied, so far, by a certain growth of the

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rich peasants from among the more well-to-do middle peasants and a diminution of the poor groups, of which some become proletarianised while others -- the greater part -- are gradually transferring to the middle group.^[6]

This presentation was, nevertheless, inadequate, since it referred to "social conditions" in general, and lead the reader to suppose that these *sufficed* to account for the type of differentiation noted, whereas this was not the case.

True, the type of differentiation noted was taking place within the general conditions of Soviet power, with nationalization of the land and the functioning of the *mir* given new life by the Agrarian Code of 1922.^[7]

However, within the setting of these general conditions, the form taken by the differentiation of the Soviet peasantry was due to the *political line* that was followed (characterized in particular by the tax abatements enjoyed by the poor and middle peasants) and also, and especially, to the *struggles waged by the poor and middle peasants themselves* with a view to better equipping and organizing themselves.^[8]

(b) *Statistics illustrating class differentiation in the Soviet peasantry in 1927*

A great variety of statistics have been produced concerning class differentiation in the Soviet peasantry. Here I shall use the ones calculated by S. G. Strumilin. This Soviet economist and statistician tried to classify peasant farms in accordance with the *criteria proposed by Lenin at the Second Comintern Congress*.^[9] By these criteria the poor peasants were those who could get from their farms only what they needed to live on, or who even needed to take on additional paid work in order to survive. The middle peasants were those who had a small surplus which, when the harvest was good, enabled them to accumulate a little. The rich peasants were those whose surplus was sufficiently large and regular to enable them to accumulate and to exploit the other rural strata by employing wage labor, practicing usury, and so on.

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These definitions, as applied by Strumilin and the Central Statistical Board, gave the following table^[10] showing the social divisions of the Soviet peasantry in 1926-1927:

<i>Social divisions</i>	<i>percent</i>
-------------------------	----------------

Poor peasants	29.4
Middle peasants	67.5
Rich peasants	3.1

These figures were necessarily only approximate.^[11] Nevertheless, it is clear that the kulaks were few in number, and, especially, that their share in the sale of produce outside the village was a minor one, as is proved by statistics which, though of different origin, agree on this point.

(c) The supply of grain to the market and the class differentiation of the peasantry

According to the statistics quoted by Grosskopf, in 1925 it was the poor and middle peasants who provided most of the grain that came on to the market -- over 88 percent, as against 11.8 percent provided by the rich peasants.^[12]

The importance of the sales of grain effected by the poor and middle peasants (despite the relatively small size of the harvest calculated *per head*) was due to the fact that they were *obliged to sell their crops* (for lack of liquid assets) in order to pay their debts and their taxes (which fell due in the autumn) and to make indispensable purchases of manufactured goods, including the equipment their farms lacked, and acquisition of which would enable them to reduce their dependence on the kulaks. *The poor and middle peasants played an even bigger role in the provisioning of the towns*, for the greater part of the grain they sold found its way there toward the end of the summer and in the autumn, whereas the rich peasants, in the course of the year, sold part of their surplus on the village market.^[13]

These facts show clearly the erroneousness of the oversimplified thesis of a "kulak strike" which Kamenev put forward

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starting in 1925 to explain the procurement difficulties of 1925-1926.^[14] At that time, Kamenev, relying on figures from the Central Statistical Board which were based not on *peasants' incomes* but on *area of land possessed*,^[15] declared that kulak farms made up 12 percent of all peasant farms and held 61 percent of the "grain surplus."^[16] From these figures Kamenev drew the mistaken conclusion that the rich peasants received most of the money that was made in the countryside, and were the principal buyers of the consumer goods, and industrially made means of production bought there. This thesis *tended to give backing to the ideas of Preobrazhensky, who claimed that to fix high prices for industrial products and low prices for agricultural products would not hurt the mass of the peasantry* -- since the poor and middle peasants were supposed not to participate to any great extent in commercial exchanges -- while it would enable the state to achieve a higher rate of accumulation by levying a "tribute" from the richest peasants.

Contrary to these claims, about three-quarters of the grain *sent to the towns* came at that time from the farms of the poor and middle peasants, and they bought more than 80 percent of the manufactured goods sold in the villages,^[17] especially with a view to providing better equipment for their farms, which were gravely lacking in instruments of production.

The proportions given above for the origin of the grain put on the market are confirmed by the figures Stalin mentioned in his speech of May 28, 1928, to the students of the Sverdlov University. He showed that in 1926-1927 the kulaks provided 20 percent of this grain, as against 74 percent provided by the poor and middle peasants and 6 percent by the collective and

state farms.^[18]

(d) The social and political role of the kulaks

It would, of course, be a grave mistake to deduce from these facts that the social and political role played at that time by the kulaks was negligible. On the contrary, it was very important.

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But its importance lay not in the sphere of production but elsewhere: it lay in the sphere of *circulation*, in the commercial relations the kulaks maintained with the poor and middle peasants; in the sphere of ideology, in the illusion they offered of possible future individual enrichment on a substantial scale, an illusion to which a certain number of middle peasants succumbed, consequently turning away from collective forms of production; in the sphere of politics, especially through the influence the rich peasants could exercise in the peasants' assemblies (the *skhod*).^[19]

The important role played by the rich peasants was rooted in the nature of the social relations that reproduced themselves under the NEP: wage labor, leasing of land, hiring out of agricultural implements, and capitalist trade. These relations enabled the kulaks to wield great influence -- out of all proportion with the number of their farms or their share in production. It was on the basis of these social relations that there developed the struggle of the rich peasants to exert increasing domination over the poor and middle peasants.

However, it was one thing to recognize these facts but quite another to conclude from them that the kulaks possessed decisive economic influence in production and in the provision of supplies for the towns, as the Trotskyist-Zinovievist opposition mistakenly did conclude.^[20] Although the conclusions drawn by this opposition were rejected by the Bolshevik Party, its "analyses" left in circulation a distorted picture of the social relations existing in the Soviet countryside. Despite the ultimate political defeat of the opposition, the essential elements of its analyses were present, in barely modified form, in the interpretation that the Party leadership gave in 1928 and 1929 to the procurement crisis (when it tried to explain this crisis by a "kulaks' strike") and in the way that it sought to "deal with" the contradictions among the peasants and the contradictions that opposed the peasantry as a whole to the Soviet power.

We must now examine successively the role of the different strata of the peasantry in the procurement crisis of 1927-1928, and the role that these strata were in a position to play in

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future increases in agricultural production, especially grain production.

II. The class foundations of the procurement crisis of 1927-1928

In order to reveal the class foundations of the procurement crisis of 1927-1928 it is necessary to study the way in which this crisis proceeded. This I shall try to do in the following pages, relying again upon the analyses made by S. Grosskopf who has demolished many of the "accepted ideas" on the matter.

(a) The first phase of the procurement and the sales made by the kulaks

During the first quarter (July to September) of the agricultural campaign of 1927-1928 the quantities of grain procured by the state and cooperative organs were, as we have seen,^[21] greater than those procured in the very good year 1926-1927. This increase was all the more remarkable because the harvest of 1927 was smaller than that of the previous year,^[22] and the distribution of grain production was unfavorable: the regions most affected by the fall in production were those described as "having a surplus," because their production normally served to meet some of the grain needs of the less favored regions (those described as "having a deficit").

Analysis shows that the increase in procurement during July-September 1927 came mainly from the rich peasants. On the one hand, it was they who had priority as regards means of production and transport, since a big proportion of these means belonged to them; on the other, they were in a hurry to sell before the month of October, the time when the poor and middle peasants usually brought their grain to market, thereby lowering the obtainable price. Furthermore, since the policy followed by the Soviet authorities in 1926-1927 had pre-

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vented grain prices from rising in the spring of 1927, the rich peasants had no hope of a price-rise in the spring of 1928, and this gave them an extra incentive for getting rid of their produce quickly -- hence the increase in procurement in July-September 1927.^[23]

The accelerated delivery of grain by the rich peasants during the summer of 1927 does not mean, of course, that they had not stocked up a certain amount of grain. It does show, however, that in the autumn of 1927 the bulk of the "reserves" held in the countryside was not concentrated in their hands.^[24]

(b) The second phase of the procurement and the struggles of the poor and middle peasants

Thus, from autumn on it was usually the poor and middle peasants who supplied the grain procured. In the autumn of 1927 these supplies failed to materialize.

Two immediate reasons account for what happened. First, the fall in the supply of manufactured goods to the rural areas in the second half of 1927. Part of the selling of grain done by the poor and middle peasants was intended to secure the cash they needed to buy manufactured goods, in particular the small-scale instruments of production which they lacked. In so far as in the autumn of 1927 there was also a decline in the supply of these products, there was as well a decline in sales of grain. The tax reductions which had been granted to the poor and middle peasants also meant that the "constraint to sell" imposed on them by their fiscal obligations was now less acute.

Another immediate reason for the fall in procurement from the autumn of 1927 on is connected with a certain degree of negligence on the part of the state and cooperative organs, which in 1927 showed particular passivity. This was due to the fact that the official organs were now less afraid of competition from private traders, who had been subjected to more severe restrictions than previously. Their passivity also resulted from the contradictory directives issued by the central authority to

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the official procurement agencies: whereas Gosplan called on them *actively to encourage the peasants to sell* their crops, at the same time directives from the Party and the government *warned them against possible competition among themselves*. The Soviet authorities were indeed concerned to prevent such competition among the procurement organs from bringing about a rise in the price of grain. One of the consequences of these directives was that most of *the buyers on behalf of the procurement organs waited for the peasants to come on their own initiative to offer them grain* -- which the peasants did not do.^[25]

The shortage of industrial goods available in the countryside, the reduction in taxation and the greater passivity of the procurement organs do not, however, furnish more than a partial explanation of the fall in grain sales. To complete the explanation we need to examine more closely the *conditions under which the poor and middle peasants carried out most of their selling of grain*,

It can be seen already from the facts given above (those that show the high proportion of grain sold from farms where the smallest amount was available per head) that *marketing of grain did not correspond, broadly speaking, to the existence of a "surplus" of grain* held by the peasants. Such a "surplus" would imply that the basic needs of the poor and middle peasants for grain (for their own food, for feeding their animals, and for building up reserves adequate to enable them to wait for the next harvest without anxiety) had been largely covered by their production. That was far from being the true situation.

Actually, in 1927-1928, when weather conditions were generally poor, the bulk of the peasants, who lacked adequate means of production, harvested only a poor crop. To be sure, these peasants, taken as a whole, sold large quantities of grain, but they did so only to the extent that they were obliged to, in order to pay their taxes or to buy industrial goods, if these were to be had.^[26] When this constraint or this possibility ceased to be present, they sold as little grain as they could, for, in the case of most of the poor and middle peasants, such sales

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entailed *serious hardship*. They therefore preferred to improve their level of personal consumption, and of consumption by their underfed animals, and also, if possible, to keep at least a minimum of reserve stocks. For the peasants, having such reserves at their disposal meant limiting the risk that they might be compelled to buy grain from the rich peasants before the next harvest became available, and, since such purchases usually had to be made on credit, to become ever more dependent on the rich peasants.

Investigations carried out in 1926-1927, a year of good harvest, showed that *even in the so-called surplus zones, the needs of agriculture itself were not being adequately met, as regards personal consumption by most of the peasants, feeding of their animals, and maintenance of stocks of seed-corn and reserve supplies*.^[27] This applied even more in 1927, when the harvest was considerably smaller. And it was just at that moment that the supply of industrial goods to the rural areas declined sharply and that taxes were reduced. Under those conditions for the poor and middle peasants to have brought to the procurement agencies the same amount of grain as in the previous year would have necessitated a *political* willingness on their part which did not exist at that time, and which had hardly been prepared for by the history of the Party's relations with the peasant masses.^[28]

III. The forms of struggle of the poor and middle peasants in the NEP period

The problem of the procurement crisis cannot be isolated from the low standard of living of

the bulk of the peasantry,^[29] the inadequacy of the means of production at their disposal, and *the struggle of the poor and middle peasants to avoid falling into increasing dependence on the rich peasants.*

(a) *The struggle to acquire means of production*

For the poor and middle peasants the chief purpose of their sales of produce was to acquire the means needed to increase

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their production, and thereby to *reduce their dependence on the rich peasants who owned a large proportion of the means of cultivation and of transport.*

On the morrow of the division of the land, which was generally not accompanied by a share-out of the other means of production,^[30] the poor and middle peasants were the ones worse off in this respect. Subsequently, therefore, it was they who suffered most from the meagerness of the supply of instruments of labor to agriculture. In 1927 the total number of machines and implements possessed by Soviet agriculture was only two-thirds the prewar figure. A very large proportion of the implements and machines that were available were held by the rich peasants, who hired them out at high rates to the poor and middle peasants.

Investigations carried out in 1924 -- and in 1927 the situation had hardly begun to change -- showed that *scythes were in short supply and most of the peasants had to do their reaping with sickles. Iron ploughs were also lacking.* Industry supplied very few, just as it supplied little steel to the village craftsmen. Most of the peasants had to do their ploughing with a *sokha* -- a wooden swing-plough. *The other tools needed for cultivation were also largely unavailable, as were axes and saws.*^[31] As for reapers and threshers, these were mostly possessed by the rich peasants.

The inadequate provision of instruments of labor to the poor and middle peasants was the underlying factor in the development of *specific forms of dependence* by the mass of the peasants upon the rich peasants, and the specific forms of *exploitation* to which the latter subjected the working peasants. This inadequacy explains the *extreme fragility of the economy of the poor and middle peasants and the close interdependence between the supply of means of production to the rural areas and the amount of produce the poor and middle peasants were able and willing to supply for procurement.* What happened in the agricultural year 1925-1926 is extremely instructive from this standpoint, as it was a sort of *"dress rehearsal" for the crisis of 1927-1928, resulting, however, in different solutions.*

In 1925-1926 the harvest was a good one. During the first

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quarter of the agricultural year (July to September), off-village sales by the peasants were considerably bigger than in the previous year, but then, as was to happen again in 1927-1928, these sales fell sharply during the second quarter (October-December). It was in this connection that Kamenev spoke of a "kulaks' strike." Now, not only does analysis of the farms which sold grain at different phases of the year show that this formulation of Kamenev's was wrong, but, above all, the *subsequent progress of sales shows clearly that it was not a matter of a "strike" by a minority of peasants but of a mass phenomenon mainly connected with a poor state of supply to the rural areas of the manufactured goods purchased by the poor and middle peasants.* The immediate origin of this crisis lay in a mistake in the Soviet government's policy

toward the peasant masses. The situation could then be quickly redressed by a simple conjunctural measure, namely, *improved supply of manufactured goods to the rural areas*. Eventually the government's plan for acquiring grain was fulfilled in 1925-1926 to the extent of 97 percent, without any need to resort to "emergency measures."

It was thus demonstrated that unless there was a very poor harvest *the level of grain "surplus" and of procurement was decided mainly by the policy of the Soviet state itself* -- its price policy, the organization of grain purchases, and the supply of manufactured goods to the peasant masses.^[32]

The supply of instruments of production to the poor and middle peasants (gravely inadequate in 1927-1928)^[33] was, moreover, a decisive factor not only in relation to procurement *but also in connection with the support rendered by the Soviet government to the struggle of the peasant masses to resist the pressure exerted upon them by the kulaks*.

The lack of equipment from which the poor and middle peasants suffered meant that, in many cases, they were *obliged to lease part (or sometimes all) of their land to the rich peasants, to sell them their labor power, or to hire from them the means of labor (including draught animals)*. Thus, in 1926, in more than 72 percent of the cases where land was leased out, this was done by peasants who lacked means of

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production. Again, more than 52 percent of the *wage earners* employed in agriculture were *poor, or even middle, peasants who were unable to cultivate their land because they had not enough implements*. Very often, too, as we know, poor and middle peasants were compelled to "employ" the owner of a horse or of a plough, who preferred to *figure as an "agricultural worker"*.

A Rabkrin report dated 1927 acknowledged that "up to now, we have . . . given little attention to the social relations engendered by the practice of lending and borrowing articles used in farming."^[34]

Yet these social relations weighed very heavily upon the poor and middle peasants. It was in order to escape from them that these peasants, wanting to buy implements, went so far as to sell part of the grain that they needed in order to feed themselves and create reserves. At the same time, the shortage of implements available on the market led these same peasants to cut down their sales, while it also aggravated their dependence on the kulaks. Similarly, the policy of high prices for manufactured goods, advocated by Preobrazhensky, was liable to reduce the capacity of the poor and middle peasants to equip themselves, and so to increase their dependence on the kulaks and to strengthen the latter.

Two facts will suffice to show the effects on class relations in the countryside of an inadequate supply of agricultural equipment. On the one hand, according to an investigation carried out in 1924-1925 in the province of Penza, this inadequacy meant that *the middle peasants could sow only between 29 and 37 percent of the sowable land which they possessed to grain crops -- in the case of the poor peasants this percentage was as little as 18 or 19 percent, whereas for the rich peasants it was nearly 40 percent*. Furthermore, through not being cultivated well enough (especially through not being ploughed and reaped at the proper times, the yield from the land of those who "employed" the owner of a horse and plough was more than 18 percent below average, whereas the yield from the land of peasants who owned an iron plough was 23 percent above average.^[35]

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On the other hand, the poor and middle peasants often had to pay out the equivalent of *nearly one-fifth of the value of their crop in order to hire farm implements and draught animals.*^[36]

Thus, the struggle waged by the poor and middle peasants to equip their farms adequately was also a *struggle to free themselves from domination and exploitation by the rich peasants, and the delivery of grain by the poor and middle peasants to the procurement agencies was closely bound up with this struggle and with the capacity of the Soviet government to provide material support for the poor and middle peasants in their struggle.* Generally speaking, this support was very inadequate. In 1927 it was largely missing. *The procurement crisis was due to a great extent to this situation.*

The inadequacy of the support given to the efforts of the poor and middle peasants to equip their farms, a neglect which played into the hands of the rich peasants and compromised the expansion both of the harvest and of procurement, is all the more striking in that Lenin had often drawn the Party's attention to both the economic and the political importance of this problem. For instance, in the midst of the civil war he said: "The socialist state must extend the widest possible aid to the peasants, mainly by supplying the middle peasants with products of urban industries and, especially, improved agricultural implements, seed, and various materials . . ."^[37]

At the beginning of the NEP Lenin returned to this problem. He emphasized that the Soviet government must set itself the task of *supplying the poor peasants with more industrial goods than the capitalists had previously supplied to them,* and that what had to be supplied was "not only cotton goods for the farmer and his family, but also badly needed machines and implements, even if they are of the simplest kind."^[38]

These passages are of particular importance. They show that, as early as 1921, *Lenin had formulated the idea of an alliance between the workers and the peasants, the material foundation of which was to be the provision of means of labor*

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("even of the simplest kind") to the toiling masses of the countryside. This was the concept of an alliance "based on steel" and not merely on textiles.

Yet the policy actually followed over the years had not been that policy: only in 1926-1927 did current supplies of implements to the rural areas slightly exceed their prewar level.

(b) *The struggle of the poor and middle peasants to strengthen forms of organization that would consolidate their independence of the rich peasants*

The struggle of the poor and middle peasants *to organize themselves* so as to consolidate their independence from the rich peasants calls for special attention. *We find here confirmation of Lenin's analyses pointing to the possibility of a transition to socialism through organizing the working peasants within the framework of the NEP,*^[39] a confirmation all the more remarkable because it resulted from a development which, as Molotov acknowledged, had not received systematic and constant support from the Bolshevik Party.^[40] (This does not mean that this self-organization took place without any connection to the *ideas of socialism,* which in fact penetrated in a thousand different ways into the midst of the toiling peasantry.)

One of the forms under which the poor and middle peasants *organized themselves* was the associations for joint utilization of means of production. As a rule, these associations brought

together only a small number of farms -- usually less than ten. They were of particular importance in the grain-growing regions, in the steppes, in the Ukraine, the Ural region, and Siberia. They were important especially for the utilization of seeders and threshers. In the Ural region 32.9 percent and 28.2 percent, respectively, of these machines were used in common in this way, while in Siberia the corresponding percentages were 29.8 and 32.3. In the case of tractors the percentage was even 100.^[41]

The poor and middle peasants resorted also to traditional

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forms of mutual aid, such as *supryaga*, by which between five and seven farms jointly utilized labor power, draught animals and implements, and organized themselves to obtain credit. In this setting there developed genuine *collective work*, which resulted in many poor and middle peasants being able to cultivate part of the land they held as a result of the agrarian revolution. This movement also engendered tens of thousands of "simple" producers' cooperatives which did not enjoy the status of *kolkhozes* and were, as a rule, not officially registered. Various investigations have revealed the dimensions of this movement.^[42] But, in the report already mentioned, Molotov gave no attention to these simple forms: what he hailed was the advantages of "large units" of production, of "the larger enterprise."^[43]

In the Ukraine this form of the poor peasants' struggle was especially well developed. It was connected with the activity of the "poor peasants' committees" (*Komnezamy*, or KNS) which had appeared during the civil war. They continued to exist in that republic even after the ending of "war communism," and also developed during the NEP period. In 1925 more than 14 percent of the peasants in the Ukraine belonged to these KNS, which meant a very high percentage of the poor peasants. Research shows that most of the KNS were solidly organized and contributed effectively to raise production and the standard of living of their members. Not only did they arrange for mutual aid among the latter, and start to introduce new methods of cultivation (by modifying the system of rotation of crops), but they also helped the other peasants and took part in the forming of cooperatives and of other forms of association for joint work.

Other facts, too, testify to the importance of "spontaneous" tendencies to create peasant organizations for joint use of the soil. There was the creation of the "communities for opening up remote tracts of land." When they adopted this form of association, the peasants involved decided to go in for collective forms of cultivation (*poselki* and *vyselki*) instead of individual holdings. These collective forms were established especially in certain regions (such as the provinces of Samara, Saratov,

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and Orel) where substantial tracts of land were situated too far from the old villages to be regularly cultivated by peasants operating from these villages. It is significant that this movement was inspired mainly by poor peasants and that instead of forming new "land associations" of the traditional type, they adopted collective forms of cultivation, and because of this it was possible to ensure a rotation of crops covering several years and to avoid the fragmentation resulting from the former *mir*.^[44]

True, from the standpoint of the general structure of Soviet agriculture, the existence of these various types of organization of the poor and middle peasants did not alter the massive predominance of individual peasant farming. Nevertheless, their existence, by the very multiplicity of the forms they assumed and the liveliness and depth of the tendencies they manifested (despite the absence of systematic aid from the Soviet government and the hostility of the rich peasants), shows how great were the possibilities for transition to a socialist organization of agriculture.^[45]

IV. Agricultural policy and the procurement crisis of 1927-1928

The facts mentioned above show that the procurement crisis of 1927-1928 was not due mainly to a "kulaks' strike," but was the result of a much more complex process in which some mistakes committed by the Soviet government in relation to the poor and middle peasants played their part. As a result of these mistakes, the initiative and independent class action of these peasants suffered restriction. Subsequently, the indiscriminate resort to "emergency measures," by hitting the middle peasants as well as the kulaks, brought about even a shift in the alignment of class forces, and enabled the kulaks to increase their ideological and political influence over an important section of the peasantry. In this connection, the resistance put up by the peasant masses to the measures taken by

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the Soviet government from 1928 on not only resulted from their immediate reaction to encroachment on their material interests, but also reflected the influence that the kulaks then wielded over them. It was in that sense that a "kulak threat" made its appearance in 1928-1929.

[46]

In order to appreciate this process and how it was linked with the Soviet government's peasant policy, we must briefly recall certain facts.

(a) The shortcomings of agricultural policy in the years 1924-1927

The shortcomings of agricultural policy in the years between 1924 and 1927 were due, in the first place, to the inadequate supply of instruments of production to the rural areas, where it was the poor and middle peasants who had most need of them.[47]

It must be observed that the "cost" of supplying machinery and implements to agriculture did not amount at any time during the NEP to a burden that could be thought too heavy for the Soviet economy to bear. Thus, in 1926-1927, the sum involved in these supplies came to 122.1 million prewar roubles, or 0.8 percent of the national income.[48] It will be seen, too, that the supply of agricultural equipment to be bought by the peasants did not, in principle, impose *any "charge" upon the state budget*. As for supplies on credit, these would have called for only limited advances which could be quickly recovered through the increase in production and in money incomes.

The smallness in the amount of equipment supplied was especially detrimental to the poor and middle peasants. They enjoyed, in practice, no priority in receiving this equipment, and the credit system functioned in such a way that they were not the chief beneficiaries of loans either. [49] Moreover, the importance of supplying the rural areas with traditional instruments of production, or *improved* versions of these (which the poor and middle peasants could acquire most easily), was much underestimated.

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Thus, Molotov, in his report to the Fifteenth Party Congress on "Work in the Rural Areas" referred dismissively to the supplying of simple means of production to the peasants as a "sorry 'progress.'" [50]

The lack of an economic effort to give priority aid to the poor and middle peasants entailed serious consequences. Such priority aid was *needed from the political standpoint*, because support for the Soviet government from the poor and middle peasants was indispensable if the dictatorship of the proletariat was to be consolidated; and from the economic standpoint as well, because *it was the farms of the poor and middle peasants that held the biggest potentialities for increasing production, since they were underequipped* -- a large proportion of their land was not even being cultivated and, because they had no implements of their own, the yield from what was cultivated was lower than anywhere else, and so most susceptible to rapid increase.

(b) *The underestimation of the potentialities of the poor and middle peasants' farms*

Generally speaking, the shortcomings of agricultural policy in 1924-1927 were bound up with a definite underestimation of the potentialities of the poor and middle peasants' farms.^[51]

In 1928 and 1929, even within the setting of the NEP, the potentialities of Soviet agriculture were still considerable, provided that the peasants were properly supplied with instruments of labor and helped in their efforts to extend the area under cultivation and increase yields, and to organize themselves more effectively.

The "image" of the Soviet peasant as "routine-minded" and "lazy" is false. To be convinced of this one has only to note that in 1925-1926 *gross agricultural production reached the prewar level, even though there were fewer means of production in the countryside than at an earlier date.*^[52]

The underequipping of agriculture was due to old equipment wearing out and the crying inadequacy of supplies of

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new equipment. It was not due at all to any so-called indifference or "indolence" on the part of the peasantry. On the contrary, statistics show that in 1927 expenditures on purchases of equipment were 70 percent greater than they were before the war.^[53]

The economist Oganovsky observed how much greater the potentialities of agriculture in this period were than they had been before the Revolution. He wrote: "Neither the economic and social facts nor the importance and role of the cadres and the factors of production are comparable. And if the contexts are incommensurable there cannot, either, be anything in common between the results obtained then and those obtainable at the present time, as we can observe here and now."^[54]

Some estimates made at that time sought to take account, partly at least, of the potentialities of NEP agriculture, especially with a view to forecasting the agricultural production and the "net balance."^[55] Thus, Osvok estimated the grain harvest that could be obtained in 1931 at 87.8 million metric tons -- an increase of 14.9 percent on 1926 -- which should provide a "net balance" of 14.6 million metric tons -- 56 per cent more than in 1926, which meant a net market availability of 18.7 percent.

This estimate was actually based on a very low estimate of the yield to be obtained in 1931. It assumed that this yield would be the same as in 1928, so that only the area cultivated would be larger. It was all the more certainly an underestimate in that, already in 1926, the yield per hectare was higher than the prewar average,^[56] despite the underequipping from which Soviet agriculture still suffered. If sales of means of production to agriculture had continued at the

same rate as in 1925 it would have been reasonable to expect a grain harvest of about 92 million metric tons, which would have given a "net balance" in the region of 17 million metric tons.^[57]

The actual potentialities of NEP agriculture at the end of the 1920s were all the greater in that *the poor and middle peasants were at that time ready to enter step by step upon the road of cooperation*, of collective labor and production (provided that they were really helped by the Soviet government,

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and not subjected to measures that harmed them and shook the foundations of the worker-peasant alliance). These forms of labor and production implied -- if the peasants entered into them voluntarily -- great possibilities of increased harvests. They made possible a fuller utilization of the land area, with employment of machinery and carrying out of cultivation work with the minimum loss of time. This was confirmed by experience during that period.

However, the Party leadership tended to underestimate the possibilities of NEP agriculture and not to reckon with the *real requirements* for developing it along the cooperative and collective road.

(c) The small amount of aid given to the development of collective farming and cooperation

From the beginning of the NEP to the Fifteenth Congress (at the end of 1927), the efforts made by the poor and middle peasants to undertake *various forms of collective labor or production* remained without systematic support. Molotov recognized this fact, though omitting to draw any practical conclusions from it, when he declared: "It is now important to realise . . . that we are lagging behind, that we are not keeping pace with the new Socialist elements now developing in the village. What we lack now is courage and perseverance in stimulating the collectivisation of the village, primarily because we do not know enough about it."^[58]

At that time, Molotov did not conclude from this observation that a substantial acceleration of development towards collective farming was really possible. He said, on the contrary, that "the development of individual enterprise along the socialist path is a long and tedious process. It will require many years to pass over from individual to communal farming."^[59]

This underestimation of the possibilities of collective farming was accompanied by inadequate backing of the cooperative movement.

We know the role that Lenin ascribed to cooperation as a

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form leading to socialist organization of production.^[60] Yet by 1927, despite the undeniable development of cooperation, the Bolshevik Party had failed to give it all the necessary aid, being influenced in this by the idea that cooperation mainly served the interests of the rich peasants -- whereas experience showed how important it was for the poor and middle peasants. Here, too, Molotov, in his report to the Fifteenth Party Congress, noted the insufficiency of the work accomplished. After quoting Lenin on cooperation he said that "this statement made by Lenin has not yet been fully appreciated by us. At any rate, it has not been sufficiently reflected in our practical work."^[61]

And yet a number of Party resolutions had already drawn attention to the role that development of the cooperatives should play. I may mention, in particular, a resolution adopted by the Twelfth Conference of the CPR(B), in August 1922, which emphasized the importance of agricultural credit, and a resolution of the Thirteenth Party Congress (May 1924), which pointed out that the development of cooperative trade would enable the poor peasants to increase their production and sales while limiting the power of the kulaks.^[62] In April 1925 the Fifteenth Party Conference reaffirmed the need to organize agricultural credit. It called on the cooperatives to take over the processing and marketing of agricultural produce and the supply of means of production to the peasant masses. This resolution also appealed to the cooperatives to encourage the development of all possible forms of collective working of the soil.

In fact, despite these resolutions, and Lenin's statements about the role to be played by the cooperatives (especially in "raising the small economy and in facilitating its transition . . . to large-scale production on the basis of voluntary association"),^[63] the development of the cooperatives was not supported by the Soviet state with all the necessary vigor. The cooperatives were not drawn firmly in a direction that would have strengthened within a short time the farms worked by the poor and middle peasants, thereby also ensuring growth and regularity in grain procurement.

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On October 1, 1927, nearly 40 percent of the Soviet peasants were, nevertheless, members of state cooperative societies -- but these societies were much more concerned with buying agricultural produce from the peasants than with selling them means of production, which meant that the poor and middle peasants took relatively little interest in them.^[64] As regards the credit cooperatives, their activity benefited less than 20 percent of the peasants, they charged relatively high rates of interest, and from 1925 on they granted loans only for comparatively large amounts, exceeding the needs and capacities of the poor peasants, so that the latter got almost no advantage from the existence of these cooperatives and had to turn to the usurers.^[65]

The situation that existed at the end of the NEP was due both to the inadequate attention paid to the needs of the poor and middle peasants and to the corruption and negligence that reigned very widely in the grassroots administration of the cooperative system. The funds placed at the disposal of the cooperatives by the state for the purpose of making loans to the poor peasants remained practically unused. The local cooperatives did not take the steps needed for these funds to be employed. Moreover, they were too remote in their activities from the conditions in which the peasants lived, and were often held back by the bureaucratic control exercised by the district soviets.^[66] This state of affairs was, of course, related to the feebleness of the Party's roots in the countryside, a crucial problem to which I shall return.

V. The aggravation of the contradictions through the peasant and agricultural policy followed in 1928 and 1929.

In the light of the facts which have been mentioned, the procurement crisis of 1927-1928 thus appears as not at all the result of an "inevitable economic crisis" but as the outcome of *political mistakes*. These were due to the feebleness of the

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Party's roots in the countryside and also to ideological reasons which led the Party (even while recognizing that agriculture was the basis of economic development) to underestimate in practice the aid that should have been given to the peasant masses, and to concentrate nearly all

its efforts on industry.

The procurement crisis of 1927-1928, unlike that of 1925-1926, did not lead to a rectification of agricultural policy. The increasing stress laid on large-scale industrialization blocked the way to any serious and rapid improvement in the supply of manufactured goods to the rural areas. At the same time, fulfilling the industrialization program required that procurement be maintained, at all costs, at a sufficiently high level. The immediate consequence was the imposition of the "emergency measures" at the beginning of 1928, and the impossibility, despite attempts made by the Party, of giving them up. Yet the renewal of these measures did not help to improve the situation in agriculture -- quite the contrary. There was something worse, however: the renewal of the emergency measures was felt by a large section of the peasants to signify an abandonment of the worker-peasant alliance as it had existed until then, while the worsening of the economic situation in the countryside also caused them discontent. This determined a realignment of class forces in the village, and increased the ideological and political influence of the kulaks. A crisis of the worker-peasant alliance thus resulted, and during 1929 caused the Party (because of the way it analyzed the situation) to abandon the NEP suddenly and completely. This abandonment took place, as we shall see, in conditions that were unfavorable to the functioning of the *kolkhozes*, from which ensued, among other things, the very grave crisis of agricultural production that marked the first half of the 1930s.

The fact that through 1928 and 1929 the emergency measures continued to be enforced meant that these measures could no longer be regarded as merely "emergency" measures, as they had been described at the beginning of 1928. They became, on the contrary, "ordinary" measures. What was happening, in practice, was *transition to a policy different from the NEP*, a transition which entailed a series of consequences.

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(a) The chief economic effects of the situation created by the procurement crisis and the protracted application of the "emergency measures"

The procurement crisis and the protracted application of the emergency measures had *negative repercussions on grain production, and then on agricultural production generally*. These consequences proceeded from two types of sequence of cause and effect. On the one hand, the technico-economic: when requisitioning deprived some peasants of even *the grain they needed for sowing*, that led directly to a subsequent fall in production. On the other hand, ideological and political: when the peasants thought the amount of grain that would remain at their disposal depended not on what they produced but on decisions to be taken by the administrative authorities, they were not disposed to increase their production. Reciprocally, the fall in production and the economic consequences of the application of the emergency measures had, in turn, political effects. At this level "economics turned into politics," as Lenin had noted at the time of the peasant revolts in the last phase of "war communism." This transformation of economics into politics was the most serious result of the introduction and then renewal of the "emergency measures."

(1) The fresh decline in grain production in 1928, the renewal of the emergency measures in 1928-1929, and the decline in procurement

All the tensions provoked in the rural areas by the application of the emergency measures of

1928, and by the way in which they were applied, had a *negative effect on grain production*. In 1928 this production was *down again* as compared with 1927 -- it came to only 73.3 million metric tons.^[67] As compared with 1926, the decline in production was 3.1 million metric tons.

This fall in production entailed a tendency for procurement to fall. The Soviet government dealt with the situation by

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continuing, as we know, to resort to emergency measures. However, under the combined effects of the decline in the harvest and the exhaustion of the peasants' reserve stocks, the amount of grain procured now suffered a real *collapse*. It came to no more than 8.3 million metric tons, or about 78.4 percent of the procurement obtained without emergency measures in 1926-1927.^[68] This had important consequences for the Soviet economy as a whole.

A particularly notable sign of the exhaustion of the peasants' reserve stocks was the sharp drop in the amount procured in the first half of 1929. During those six months, the amount procured came to no more than about 2.6 million metric tons of grain (less than half the procurement achieved in the first half of 1928).^[69] At the same time *prices of grain on the private markets* reached new peaks.^[70]

The severe fall in the quantity of grain held by the state and cooperative organs threatened more gravely than ever before the supplying of the towns and the regularity of exports.

There was something even worse: the impact of the emergency measures upon the peasantry was such that their *production effort declined again*. Thus 1929 saw a fresh fall in the grain harvest. It came to no more than 71.7 million metric tons.^[71] As compared with 1926, the reduction was 4.7 million metric tons. This decline was all the more catastrophic because it occurred at a moment when the struggle for industrialization was in full swing and called, if it was to be carried on without subjecting the economy as a whole to excessive tension, for an increasing supply of agricultural produce, primarily grain.

The emergency measures thus *did not help really to overcome* the initial difficulties. On the contrary, they *contributed to disrupting the working of the NEP* (in fact, they *put an end to it*) and broke the dynamism that Soviet agriculture had shown until 1926-1927.

It was the collapse of the harvest and of the grain procurement in 1928 and 1929 (that is, one of the consequences of the protracted implementation of the emergency measures) that induced the Bolshevik Party to go over to collectivization on a

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vast scale at the end of 1929. The immediate aim of the "turn" thus made was to stop the decline in procurement. The "turn" took place in conditions where it was no longer possible to rely on agricultural successes previously obtained, or on persuasion of the peasants, and their enthusiasm. The large-scale collectivization begun in the autumn of 1929 was thus carried out essentially "from above," by means of administrative measures. It did indeed make possible imposition on the *kolkhozes* of *relatively high delivery quotas*, even when their harvest had been poor, which was the case for several years. On the morrow of collectivization as thus carried out, from 1931 on, the grain harvest *often fell by 12 or 14 percent below the level of 1926*. The maintenance and increase of the exactions from grain production were thereafter effected *at the expense of the peasants' own consumption* -- but these facts already belong to another period, that of the so-called revolution from above.^[72]

It will be observed that the measures taken in 1928 and 1929 did not effect overall

agricultural production as badly as they affected grain production. The reason for this was that the emergency measures hardly affected, directly at any rate, crops other than grain crops.^[73]

The primordial importance ascribed by the Bolshevik Party to the procurement problem was due to the decisive role that the "net grain balance" of agriculture played in the provisioning of the town population and in maintaining exports.

(2) *The problem of the grain balance*

The most significant figure in this connection is that for the "net grain balance" from agriculture, meaning the net amount of grain definitively marketed outside the village.^[74] Even in 1926-1927 (that is, before the application of the emergency measures) this balance came to no more than 10.5 million metric tons, as compared with about 19 million metric tons in 1913.^[75] The contraction of the net grain balance in comparison with that before the war was *bigger than the decline in production*, although the peasantry had not quite recovered

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their prewar standard consumption of grain (the rural population having increased).^[76]

In general, however, 1926-1927 food consumption by the mass of the peasantry had reached a level markedly higher than in the years preceding the Revolution. The distribution of income among the peasants was much less unequal than before, and a certain increase was observed in the intake per head of products rich in protein (meat, milk, and eggs).^[77]

In relation to prewar, the decline in the net grain balance of agriculture gave rise to a series of grave problems. While this balance had fallen by about 44 percent between 1909-1913 and 1926-1927,^[78] *consumption by the towns and industry had risen by about 28 percent between 1913 and 1927.*^[79] The resort to emergency measures did not bring about any improvement in this aspect of the situation, for *the grain balance of agriculture declined in 1927-1928.* It then stood at only 8.33 million metric tons. In 1928-1929 the emergency measures enabled the grain balance to be kept at the same level^[80] as in 1927-1928, despite the decline in the harvest, but this result was secured only by *reducing consumption in the villages*, which had to bear the whole brunt of the fall in grain production.

A reduction in their consumption of grain had thus been forced upon the peasants by means of the emergency measures. Already in 1928 the application of these measures had led to the peasant masses being deprived of *some of the grain they needed for subsistence and for sowing for the next season.* Stalin noted this in his report of July 13, 1928, to the plenum of the CC, when he said that it had proved necessary to "press harder" on certain regions and to take from "the peasants' emergency stocks."^[81]

In the regions affected by such exactions, many peasants had tried to obtain from the towns the grain that they needed.^[82] The distribution of grain in the towns was thereby disorganized. The urban population, fearing that its consumer needs would not be met, tried to hoard, and this made it necessary to introduce rationing in certain towns.^[83] The effect of this was to prevent the peasants from supplying themselves

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from the shops. In some cases the Soviet administration was even obliged to sell part of the grain procurement back to the peasants.

Altogether, after 1927, the supply of food to both town and country worsened, and the

amount of grain available for export fell sharply -- to such an extent that symptoms of crisis appeared also in the sphere of external trade.

(3) *The procurement crisis and foreign trade*

The suddenness with which the emergency measures were applied was due above all to the fact that the Bolshevik Party was poorly represented among the peasantry and its concrete knowledge of peasant and agricultural problems was very inadequate. However, the rigidity shown in the application of these measures was due also to the seriousness of the impact which this decline in procurement had on Soviet foreign trade.

The figures are self-explanatory: whereas in 1926-1927 grain exports amounted to 2,160,000 metric tons (which was only 22.4 percent of the 1913 figure),^[84] in 1928 they fell to 89,000 metric tons.^[85] And it needs to be added that this was the figure for gross exports. They were made possible only by drawing on the State's reserves, which fell to a level so low that the Soviet Union had to reconstitute its emergency stocks by importing grain itself in the summer of 1928 -- to the amount of 250,000 metric tons.^[86]

A tremendous effort was therefore required in 1928 to make up for the fall in the exports of grain. The results of this effort were positive: the total value of exports increased, in spite of everything, by about 3.8 percent, reaching the figure of 799.5 million roubles.^[87] This increase was achieved through a substantial boosting of exports of oil, butter, eggs, timber, furs, etc.^[88] Only the centralization of exports by the Commissariat of Trade made such an effort feasible: and it was paid for by the *appearance of fresh shortages on the domestic market*.

However, the launching of the industrialization program

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(which was based on *extensive reliance on imports of industrial goods from abroad*) came up against difficulties as a result of the *poor progress in exports*. The latter were not sufficient to secure the growing amount of imports needed. The Soviet Union, which had a surplus in its foreign trade balance in 1926-1927, in 1928 showed a deficit of 153.1 million. If the emergency measures were renewed in 1929, this was done also in order to redress the foreign trade situation. It was decided, in fact, to *increase grain exports*, regardless of the fall in procurement: hence the aggravated shortages.

The procurement crisis thus came into violent contradiction with the demands of the industrial plan. This is the principal economic aspect of the crisis at the end of the 1920s. It is an aspect which cannot be separated from *the form of industrialization policy* which was developed at that time.

The political consequences of the procurement crisis and of the measures taken to cope with it were closely interwoven with the "economic" consequences. They conditioned each other. For the future of the worker-peasant alliance, and so for the form of the dictatorship of the proletariat, the political consequences were of decisive importance. They were at the heart of the overall process of the class struggles of this period. It is these consequences that we must now study.

(b) *The principal effects on class relations in the countryside of the situation created by the procurement crisis and*

*the protracted application of the
emergency measures*

The political consequences for the worker-peasant alliance of the situation which developed after January 1928 were, of course, complex and contradictory. The statements made at the time by the Party leaders, and what appeared in the press, reflect these contradictions. At certain moments stress was laid on the increased influence of the Party among the peasant masses which was supposed to have resulted from the operation of the emergency measures. At other moments, mention

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was made of the negative effect of these measures, which were said to have enabled the kulaks to rally broad sections of the peasantry around them. Stalin's writings also reveal divergent appreciations, reflecting both the contradictions in the objective situation and the effects of the struggles going on within the Party leadership.

*(1) Some formulations by Stalin regarding
the consequences of the application of
the emergency measures during the first
half of 1928*

During the plenum of April 1928 Stalin emphasized the strengthening of the Party's leading role which was supposed to have resulted from the application of the emergency measures. After declaring that these measures had "enabled us to put an end to the procurement crisis" (which was soon to be proved untrue) and to render the local Party organizations more or less sound by purging them of "blatantly corrupt elements who refuse to recognize the existence of classes in the countryside," he added: "We have improved our work in the countryside, we have brought the poor peasants closer to us and won the allegiance of the overwhelming majority of the middle peasants, we have isolated the kulaks and have somewhat offended the well-to-do top stratum of the middle peasants."^[89]

We know, however, that in practice the emergency measures were far from having affected only the kulaks. Indeed, as early as February 1928 Stalin had sent out a circular warning the Party's local organizations against "excesses," affecting strata of the peasantry other than the rich peasants, which might "create new difficulties"^[90] with these other strata.

At the beginning of the summer of 1928, while remaining in favor of the emergency measures -- which he thought were impossible to renounce -- Stalin took a much more pessimistic view of the situation developing in the countryside, from the standpoint of the political and ideological relations between classes. This found expression in his statements of July 1928,

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particularly his report to the Leningrad Party organization on the results of the plenum held at the beginning of that month. In this report Stalin acknowledged that the procurement crisis had not ended in March, and that in April-June it had been necessary to extend the emergency measures to the point of taking from the *emergency stocks* held by the peasants, with, as the result, "renewed recourse to emergency measures, the arbitrary administrative measures, the infringements of revolutionary law, the house-to-house visitations, the unlawful searches and so on . . ." Having described these measures and the form they had taken, Stalin added that they had "worsened the political situation in the country and created a threat to the bond (between the workers and the peasants)."^[91] Dealing with the same problem, the resolution adopted by the

July 1928 plenum noted the "discontent among certain strata of the peasantry, expressed in demonstrations against the arbitrary administrative measures adopted in a number of regions."^[92]

Nine months later, to be sure, at the plenum of April 1929, when Stalin attacked Bukharin for the first time before the CC,^[93] he again spoke of the need to resort to emergency measures, asserting that these measures were "backed by the popular support of the middle- and poor-peasant masses,"^[94] a claim that was not confirmed by the actual way in which procurement was carried out in the months that followed.

Thus, Stalin's appreciations of the class consequences of the emergency measures varied a great deal. They do not enable us to discover the answer to the real question: what was the principal aspect of the contradictory effects of these measures?

In order to answer this question we need to *take an overall view of the situation in the countryside*.

(2) *An overall view of the situation in the countryside in 1928*

When we take this overall view we see clearly that what constitutes the principal aspect of the situation is the worsening in the relations between the Soviet government and the peasantry during 1928, a worsening that involved a large pro-

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portion of the middle peasants and even some of the poor peasants (those who were affected, directly or indirectly, by the emergency measures).

The symptoms of this worsening situation were undeniable: for example, the contraction in the sown area and in the number of cattle. The latter was due not merely to the shortage of fodder (due to the extent of the emergency measures) but also to the fear felt by some of the middle peasants lest they be regarded as rich peasants.^[95] More broadly, the confidence of many peasants in the continuance of the NEP was shaken: they no longer believed in a secure future, and were also placed in an objectively difficult position through the less and less adequate supply of means of production. The climate of uncertainty developing among the peasantry was also connected with the *closure by administrative means of thousands of small-scale enterprises, while the production and distribution previously provided by these enterprises was not replaced by state and cooperative industry and trade*.

The reduction in the number of livestock, which led to a crisis in the supply of milk, butter, and meat, added to the grain crisis.^[96]

It was especially during the farming season of 1928-1929 that relations between the Soviet government and broad strata of the peasantry deteriorated. On top of the measures taken at the beginning of 1928 came other measures of a fiscal character. Henceforth a section of the peasantry were to be taxed no longer on the basis of norms fixed in advance (according to the principles adopted at the beginning of the NEP) but on "individual bases" estimated by the agents of the revenue authority. In theory, taxes levied in this way were to affect only the richest of the peasants. Actually, they also affected the middle peasants to a large extent, for a number of reasons: lack of a strict definition of the peasants who were to be taxed in this way; lack of familiarity with rural realities on the part of the revenue service; and opportunity (given these conditions) for some of the kulaks to hide themselves, so that the burden of taxation fell upon peasants who ought not to have been taxed in this way; etc.

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After November 1928 Stalin mentioned mistakes made in the application of the "individual tax." He said that only 2 or 3 percent of peasant households should have been affected by it, whereas there were several districts "where 10, 12 and even more percent of the households are taxed, with the result that the middle section of the peasantry is affected."^[97]

Following a wave of protests from the rural population, some of the peasants who had been wrongly taxed got their money back. Nevertheless, considerable harm had been done to the relations between the Soviet government and the middle peasants. Thereafter, some of the latter tended to line up with the rich peasants for joint resistance to administrative decision. Furthermore, *the economic weakening of the middle peasants increased their dependence on the kulaks.*

In this situation, toward the end of 1928 the TsIK adopted an important decision regarding the "general principles of the possession and distribution of land."^[98] This legislative text made serious changes in the Agrarian Code of 1922^[99] which were significant from two points of view: they facilitated transition to collective forms of agricultural work and production, and they restricted the possibility of land-grabbing by the kulaks.

However, the arrangements made in it regarding the general peasant assembly in the village (the *skhod*) showed that the Soviet government was obliged to cut down the powers of this assembly and to subject it to control by the administrative organs. Thereafter, decisions taken by the *skhod*, in which the middle peasants held the majority, could be annulled by the rural soviet, in which these peasants were increasingly reduced to minority status.

Politically, this measure meant a decisive break with the NEP, which had accepted the middle peasant as the central figure in the Soviet countryside. It showed that there had been a rupture between the middle peasants and the government, since it took away from these peasants the power of autonomous decision hitherto allowed them within the framework of the *skhod*. This change of direction implied a profound worsening in the relations of confidence which the NEP had

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begun to establish between the Soviet government and the middle peasantry. It showed that there was a divergence between the orientations of the latter (who had been to some extent thrust into the camp of the rich peasants) and those of the former. And, however justified some of the new orientations of the Soviet government might be, the introduction of means of constraint which were to be used to bend the will of the basic mass of the peasantry could not but result in grave political crises. Let us recall that only a little over two years before the adoption of the decision subjecting the *skhod* to tutelage -- and this decision was to be one of the instruments of what has been called the "revolution from above," that is, of a collectivization not decided upon by the peasant masses themselves -- Stalin, referring to Lenin, had said: "For carrying out a revolution it is not enough to have a correct Party line. . . . For carrying out a revolution a further circumstance is required, namely, that the masses, the broad mass of the workers, shall have been convinced *through their own experience* that the Party's line is correct."^[100]

As Lenin had forecast six years earlier,^[101] evoking circumstances similar to those of 1928, the weakening of the worker-peasant alliance was splitting the Party more and more into a tendency which was determined to "go ahead" even if the peasantry was not satisfied, and one which sought to prevent the rupture of the worker-peasant alliance.

The supporters of the first tendency, who were led by Stalin, were convinced that only rapid

industrialization and collectivization would enable the difficulties to be overcome by providing the worker-peasant alliance with a new material foundation (one of "steel," that is, of tractors) and unifying the technological conditions of production by introducing machinery into agriculture.

It was, of course, the representatives of the other tendency (described as "the Right" and led by Bukharin) who gave most attention to the weakening of the worker-peasant alliance and to the way in which the fight against the kulaks was being transformed into a fight against the middle peasants.^[102] However, representatives of the first tendency were themselves

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obliged to acknowledge the *increased political and ideological influence* of the kulaks over the middle peasants and the manifestations of discontent on the part of the latter. This was true of Kaganovich, although he advocated a "hard" line as the only way of ensuring the industrialization of the Soviet Union. In a statement made in 1928 he said that "the *serednyak* is sometimes influenced by the kulak and expresses his dissatisfaction. . . . [He has been hit] by rather heavy taxation, and by our inability at the present time to offer him prices for his grain which are commensurate with the prices of manufactured goods." In the process of taking action against the kulaks, he admitted, "we have penalized" the middle peasants.^[103]

The procurement campaign of 1928-1929 began badly. From October on, *pressure by the procurement organs* was again brought to bear over a very wide area. *Pravda* of December 2, 1928, denounced the pressure and harsh measures that were being applied to the middle and poor peasants. The attempts made to organize them had had little success, and these two classes did not constitute a force upon which the Party could really rely in the countryside. At the same time, the poor peasants were also becoming more and more discontented because of the increasing gap between the prices paid by the state (even though these had been raised a little after July 1928) and the prices prevailing on the free market (which were now three or four times as high).^[104]

Under these conditions, since there was no solid organization or political consciousness of a sufficiently high level among the peasantry, *part of the harvest was marketed outside the official channels, not only by the kulaks but also by the poor and middle peasants (who were able, through these sales, to retain a certain degree of economic strength in relation to the kulaks)*. Although sales on the "free market" were not, as a rule, actually forbidden, the local authorities often penalized them, so as to facilitate their own procurement plans. The penalties affected the middle and poor peasants as well as the kulaks, and their discontent consequently increased.

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(3) *The peasants' resistance in 1929 and the development of coercive measures*

At the beginning of 1929 there were many signs that a peasant resistance was developing against procurement measures that were being imposed with ever greater severity. From January 1929 on the Soviet press mentioned more and more often additional "categories" of peasants who were acting as enemies of the Soviet power. The press spoke of "little kulaks" (*kulachniki*), who "dance to the tune of the kulaks," and "sub-kulaks" (*podkulachniki*) who carry out sabotage on their behalf."^[105] These expressions did not relate to socioeconomic categories but to ideological ones. Their appearance reflected a reality: *the growing influence of the kulaks over the poor and middle peasants* whose direct interests were being harmed. They reflected also *an attitude of mistrust toward the peasantry in general which was widespread in*

the Party.^[106]

This attitude toward wide sections of the peasant masses was in line with the way that the local authorities interpreted the directives they received from the center. In any case, it weakened still further the worker-peasant alliance, and helped to cause a growing proportion of the peasantry to fall under the ideological and political influence of the kulaks.

In his speech at the Party's Sixteenth Conference (at the end of April 1929), Syrtsov, chairman of the Sovnarkom of the RSFSR, who supported the line of maintaining and extending the emergency measures, or other similar measures, described how the relation of forces was evolving in the countryside: "We can literally feel, sense, how things are taking a certain shape, how the kulaks are becoming conscious of themselves as a class, how their own class demands are being put forward."^[107]

The counteroffensive thus being waged by the kulaks was obviously possible only because they had succeeded (as a result of the situation which had developed after the beginning of 1928) in drawing behind them a sufficient body of peasant support. One of the resolutions adopted by the Six

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teenth Conference, while not recognizing that the worker-peasant alliance had been gravely shaken, nevertheless raised the problem of maintaining this alliance: "The question whether the peasant masses will remain faithful to the alliance with the working class, or will allow the bourgeoisie to separate them from it, depends on the line of development that agriculture is to take -- the socialist road or the capitalist road -- and, in conformity with that, on *who is going to direct the way the economy will develop -- the kulak or the socialist state.*"^[108]

It is significant that the problem thus presented was not expressed in terms of a *mass line* to be carried out among the peasantry, a task of ideological and political work aimed at persuading the peasants of the correctness of the socialist road: that it was expressed *not in political terms (the leading role of the Party and of the proletariat in relation to the peasantry)*, but in "economic" terms, in terms of the *direction of the economy by the "state."* Actually, this "direction of the economy by the State" was *assumed* to be dependent essentially on the accelerated development of industry. The Sixteenth Party Conference adopted the figures for the First Five-Year Plan which were put before it. *The future industrial results of that plan appeared as the condition required for transforming agrarian relations* through the spread of collective and state farms, so that the spread of this type of farming was still treated very cautiously by the Sixteenth Conference;^[109] but the *immediate political* requirements for strengthening the worker-peasant alliance were neglected, owing to the de facto priority accorded to *industrialization seen as the condition for this strengthening.*

The priority development of industry (and, above all, of heavy industry) at all costs was at that time regarded as the fundamental task of the hour. This resulted from the conjunction of a number of factors which will be examined later. Among them was the shortage of industrial goods (interpreted as the symptom of a "lag" of industry behind agriculture) and an increase in unemployment, for which rapid industrialization seemed the only answer. On the political plane, acceler-

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ated industrialization was seen as a means of consolidating the dictatorship of the proletariat through increasing the numbers of the working class, and also through the strengthening of the country's military potential which this industrial development would make possible.

The importance ascribed one-sidedly to the development of industry, and heavy industry in particular, led to little account being taken of the negative consequences of the *postponement* (until industry should be "sufficiently developed") of the solving of the problems involved in the consolidation of the worker-peasant alliance. Within the framework of the prevailing interpretation of the basic task of the hour, the worsened situation in the countryside, far from impelling the Party to rectify the political line which had brought this about, led on the contrary to the adoption of *fresh measures of coercion, applied, in practice, to the peasantry as a whole*; these were considered necessary for the rapid industrialization of the Soviet Union.

The most serious indication of the worsening situation in the countryside was the sharp fall in the procurement of grain during the first half of 1929.^[110]

Faced with this fall, the Party and the government tried to apply measures of a new type, so as to have as little recourse as possible to Article 107,^[111] since they had promised this to the peasants after the many protests and demonstrations in 1928. One of these measures took the form of a "voluntary undertaking," a sort of "self-fixing" by the *skhod* itself of the amount of grain to be procured.

Actually, the *skhod* (which, moreover, was often called upon to commit itself without regard to whether or not a quorum of members was present) was confronted with the obligation to ratify the procurement figure laid down by the state organs. A decision taken in July 1929 by the CC shows plainly that the quantities which the village assemblies thus "undertook" to deliver were taken in excess of their capacity and had to be reduced. This exposes the fictitious nature of the so-called self-fixing of the amount of the grain procurement. The use of such methods proved a new source of discontent among the

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peasantry, including the poor peasants to whom these measures were applied, and who, moreover, were supposed to have been consulted through "poor peasants' committees" which actually had no real existence, and often disappeared almost as soon as they had been formed.

^[112]

The most serious source of the increased tension between a large part of the peasantry and the Soviet government was constituted, however, by the measures taken against peasants who failed to deliver to the procurement organs the amounts of grain laid down. These peasants were subjected to various *penalties*. One of these penalties was *expulsion from the cooperative society, which meant that those expelled had to buy on the private market, where prices were much higher than in the cooperative shops. The effect of this was to oblige these peasants also to sell their produce on the private market, thereby risking prosecution as speculators.* Another penalty applied when the amounts laid down were not delivered was the imposition of a *fine equivalent to five times the amount not delivered*, known as the *pyatokratka*. In principle, the application of this fine was to be decided by the *skhod*, but, in view of its frequent refusal to do so, in April 1929 power to apply the fine was given to the rural soviet -- which meant, in practice, to an organ in which the peasants carried little weight and which was dominated by officials.

In June 1929 the government of the RSFSR decided, furthermore, to expand the applicability of Article 61 of the Penal Code. Henceforth, "refusal to deliver grain in fulfillment of the voluntary undertaking entered into by the village, a joint refusal by a group of rural households, and offering resistance to the implementation of the plan for building up reserves of grain [will be dealt with] in accordance with part three of this article."

This part of Article 61 provided for *penalties of up to two years' imprisonment, confiscation of property and, in some cases, exile.* Exiling and imprisonment, which had already begun to be

employed as penalties, were thus made legal. During the campaign of 1929-1930, these measures were applied with increasing frequency.^[113] This was also true of

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the "hard tax," which meant to impose upon kulaks, or peasants treated as kulaks, a contribution in grain to be paid within twenty-four hours. Since the rate at which this tax was levied often exceeded what the peasants could pay, they could find themselves sent into exile for failure to meet their obligation.

The application of Article 61 did not affect the kulaks alone, but often struck at the middle peasants. This was so also with the decision taken by the CC in July 1929 *to forbid the sale by state shops of "goods in short supply"* (matches, lamp oil, nails, textiles, etc.) *to peasants who had not delivered the amounts of grain laid down for procurement.*^[114] A measure already practiced at the local level, and at first condemned as unjustified, was now given legal force.

The local authorities were supposed to apply the various penalties with discrimination, that is, to avoid hurting the middle and poor peasants, except in exceptional cases. In reality, as shown by the many decisions by the CC condemning the abuses committed by local authorities, this was not so.

The Party leadership tried to draw a distinction between the line laid down, the correctness of which they reaffirmed, and its application, which they recognized as often being mistaken. In principle, this distinction would be justified if the formulation of the line and the demands imposed upon the local authorities had not led the latter to multiply decisions which were unacceptable owing to their class consequences (and which were, moreover, condemned post facto). Such decisions became more and more frequent during 1928 and 1929, so that the situation grew increasingly to resemble what Lenin had described and denounced in March 1919, when he said that "blows which were intended for the kulaks very frequently fell on the middle peasants. In this respect we have sinned a great deal."^[115]

During 1929 the peasants' resistance to the various coercive and penal measures developed and took many different forms. It was no longer merely a matter of "passive resistance," expressed in reduction of the sown area and slaughtering of some of the cattle, but of "offensive" reactions of one kind or another. One of these forms of resistance, which implied col-

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lective action, was called *volynka*: certain villages simply refused to supply anything whatsoever to the procurement organs. These *volynki* were punished severely. In 1929 peasant revolts were reported in a number of regions (but do not appear to have spread widely). The most important of them occurred in the mountains of Georgia (in Adzharia) and in the Pskov region. There were also attacks on procurement agents by kulaks or peasants under kulak influence.^[116]

When the Party leadership drew up the balance sheet of the procurement campaign of 1928-1929 at the beginning of July 1929, they came to the conclusion that the measures which had been taken down to that time were not providing a real solution to the problem of supplying the towns, and not enabling a sufficient quantity of grain to be centralized for export. From then on, the leading bodies of the Party, especially the general secretary's office, were led to reformulate the problem of collectivization.

Previously, this problem had been regarded as one to be tackled with care -- as a task which it was essential to carry out with wide backing and confidence on the part of the peasant

masses. Thereafter, collectivization tended to appear as the immediate means of "solving" the problems created by procurement difficulties and by the fall in grain production.

As we shall see,^[117] the Party then committed itself to a policy of accelerated collectivization for which neither it nor the peasant masses were ideologically or politically prepared. This policy was carried out in such a way that it proved the starting point of a serious rupture in the worker-peasant alliance and an unprecedented crisis in agriculture, especially grain production and stock-breeding. The supply of foodstuffs to the towns could then be ensured only through a further fall in consumption by the peasantry.

Notes

1. Let me remind the reader that the expression "during the NEP" means the period from 1921 to 1929. I have already pointed out

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that the policy actually carried out during the last years of this period amounted increasingly to a negation of the principles of the NEP. The expression "final crisis," or "general crisis," of the NEP therefore does not really mean a crisis of the "New Economic Policy" so much as the development of the contradictions characteristic of the years 1928 and 1929.

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2. *Narodnoye khozyaistvo 1961 g.*, p. 27. [p. 85]
3. *Sdvigi v selskom khozyaistve SSSR*, p. 14. [p. 85]
4. The figures for this development will be found in Grosskopf, *L'Alliance ouvrière*, Table 185, p. 310. [p. 86]
5. *Ibid.*, p. 311. [p. 86]
6. *Report of the 15th Congress of the CPSU.*, Communist Party of Great Britain, London, 1928, p. 362. [p. 87]
7. See volume I of the present book, pp. 235 ff. [p. 87]
8. See above, p. 92. [p. 87]
9. "[Preliminary draft theses on the agrarian question, for the 2nd Comintern Congress](#)," in Lenin, *CW*, vol. 31, pp. 152-164. [p. 87]
10. S. G. Strumilin, "Rassloeniye sovyetskoy derevni," in *Planovoye Khozyaistvo*, no. 3 (1928), p. 56, quoted in Grosskopf, *L'Alliance ouvrière*, p. 141. In general, this chapter will refer frequently to Grosskopf's book, which the reader interested in a detailed analysis of the problems discussed here should consult. Strumilin's article is available in French in *Recherches internationales à la lumière du marxisme*, no. 85 (no. 4 of 1975), pp. 120 ff. [p. 88]
11. The approximate character of the figures is due especially to the fact that the majority of the investigators whose work furnished the basis for these statistics were not peasants themselves and were therefore not always able to grasp precisely the *real situation* of the different forms. Nevertheless, it is to be observed that quite other sources give a social breakdown of the peasantry very similar to Strumilin's, when these sources employ the *same criteria* of categorization as he does (see Strumilin's article in *Recherches internationales*, no. 85 [no. 4 of 1975], p. 149, and Grosskopf, *L'Alliance ouvrière*, tables on pp. 309-310). It is to be observed, too, that Strumilin, who cannot be accused of being "pro-kulak", considers that the farms of the richer peasants were more strictly inspected than the others and their incomes therefore better known (*Recherches internationales*, p. 130). [p. 88]
12. These figures refer to the share contributed by peasant farms (i.e., excluding the *sovkhozes* and *kolkhozes*) in 1925. Even if

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- we set aside the share of marketed grain furnished by the well-to-do stratum of the middle peasants, the other middle peasants and the poor peasants alone were responsible for 71.5 percent of it (see Grosskopf, *L'Alliance ouvrière*, p. 142). We are concerned here still with comparative quantities, but they are highly significant. These same quantities were mentioned by Stalin in May 1928 (see above, pp. 89-90). [p. 88]
13. Grosskopf, *L'Alliance ouvrière*, pp. 142-144. [p. 88]
 14. See above, pp. 95 ff. [p. 89]
 15. Figures for the area of land included in a farm do not permit any conclusion to be drawn regarding the wealth of the farmer, as Lenin showed in *The Development of Capitalism in Russia* (*CW*, volume 3). What had been true before the Revolution was even truer under the NEP. At that time an especially large proportion of the land held by the poor and middle peasants could not be cultivated by them, for lack of tools, machinery, and horses (for some figures, see above, pp. 97-98). [p. 89]
 16. L. Kamenev, *Nashi dostizheniya, trudnosti i perspektivy*, p. 9. See also L. Kamenev, *Stati i rechi*, vol. XII (Moscow, 1926), pp. 347-371 (quoted in Grosskopf, *L'Alliance ouvrière*, pp. 138-140). [p. 89]
 17. Ya. A. Yakovlev, *Oboshibkakh khlebofurazhnogo balansa TsSU i ego istolkovatelei*, quoted in Grosskopf, *L'Alliance ouvrière*, p. 142. [p. 89]
 18. Stalin, "On the Grain Front," in *Works*, vol. 11, pp. 85 ff. The percentages (given on p. 89) were furnished by Nemchinov, a member of the collegium of the Central Statistical Board. [p. 89]
 19. The special influence of the rich peasants in the *skhod*, and their attachment to the "land commune" have been questioned: see D. J. Male, *Russian Peasant Organisation Before Collectivization*, pp. 162 ff. [p. 90]
 20. Grosskopf, *L'Alliance ouvrière*, pp. 137 ff. [p. 90]
 21. See above, pp. 36-37. [p. 91]
 22. Ibid. [p. 91]
 23. G. Pistrak, "Zernovoye khozyaistvo i khlebnii rynek S.S.S.R. vosstanovitel'nogo perioda," in *Sotsialisticheskoye Khozyaistvo*, no. 5-6 (1927), p. 256. Also Ya. A. Yakovlev, ed., *K Doprosu o sotsialisticheskoye pereustroistve selskogo khozyaistva*, pp. 98-103, 153-155, quoted in Grosskopf, *L'Alliance ouvrière*, pp. 331 ff. [p. 92]
 24. This is confirmed by the way that the emergency measures were

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- applied subsequently. *They made possible the procurement of the required amount of grain only through taking large-scale levies from the reserves held by the middle peasants, and some times by the poor peasants.* This fact was admitted more than once by the Party leadership -- see above, pp. 39-40 ff. [p. 92]
25. V. Milyutin, "Uroki khlebozagotovok," in *Na Agrarnom Fronte*, no. 4 (1928), p. vi, and A. Lvov, "Itogi khlebozagotovitel'noy kampanii 1927-1928 g.," in *ibid.*, no. 9 (1928), pp. 65-66; quoted in Grosskopf, *L'Alliance ouvrière*, p. 333. [p. 93]
 26. In this connection, although grain production increased considerably under NEP, the remark made by Lenin at the Tenth Party Conference in May 1921 (*CW*, vol. 32, p. 406 [Transcriber's Note: See Lenin's *Tenth All-Russian Conference of the R.C.P.(B.)*. -- DJR]) was still valid for the great majority of the peasants: in the absence of an adequate supply of industrial products to offer to the peasants, then only taxation would ensure the supply of foodstuffs in amounts adequate to meet the needs of the towns, industry, and exports. Most of the peasants were too poor, and their need of grain for their own consumption too poorly satisfied, to be able to sell their produce in order to hoard, or to invest, say, by subscribing to loans. [p. 93]

27. Grosskopf, *L'Alliance ouvrière*, p. 332. [p. [94](#)]
28. It should be recalled that in the summer and autumn of 1918 the Bolshevik Party supported, in principle, the movement and organization of the poor peasants (see volume I, p. 220). Whatever may have been the weaknesses of that movement (which developed during the civil war), it is significant that during the years 1921-1927 the Party offered no *systematic* backing to the various initiatives of the poor peasants. [p. [94](#)]
29. In 1926-1927 average annual income per head (i.e., per member of a family) was estimated at 78.6 roubles for the poor peasants, 113.3 roubles for the middle peasants, and 239.9 roubles for the rich peasants. That of an agricultural worker was estimated at 108.2 roubles and that of an industrial worker at 334.6 roubles (Grosskopf, *L'Alliance ouvrière*, p. 211). It must be stressed that these are only estimates, and that the "purchasing power" of the rouble varied widely from one locality or region to another. [p. [94](#)]
30. See volume I of the present work, p. 239. [p. [95](#)]
31. Grosskopf, *L'Alliance ouvrière*, pp. 239-246. [p. [95](#)]
32. *Ibid.*, p. 177. [p. [96](#)]
33. See below, p. 142. [p. [96](#)]

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34. Yakovlev, ed., *K voprosu*, p. 59, quoted in Grosskopf, *L'Alliance ouvrière*, p. 308. [p. [97](#)]
35. N. Rosnitsky, *Litso derevni*, pp. 28-29, quoted in Grosskopf, *L'Alliance ouvrière*, pp. 308-309. [p. [97](#)]
36. Yakovlev, ed., *K voprosu*, pp. 56-57. [p. [98](#)]
37. Lenin, "Resolution on the attitude to the middle peasants" (March 1919), in *CW*, vol. 29, p. 219. [*Transcriber's Note*: See Lenin's [Eighth Congress of the R.C.P.\(B.\)](#). -- DJR] [p. [98](#)]
38. Lenin, "[On the Tax in Kind](#)" (April 9, 1921), vol. 32, p. 292. [p. [98](#)]
39. *Ibid.*, p. 288. [p. [99](#)]
40. *Report of the 15th Congress*, p. 376. [p. [99](#)]
41. Grosskopf quotes numerous facts concerning the development of these forms of association and mutual aid (*L'Alliance ouvrière*, pp. 311-315). [p. [99](#)]
42. *Ibid.*, pp. 311-312. [p. [100](#)]
43. *Report of the 15th Congress*, pp. 368-369. [p. [100](#)]
44. On these points see Grosskopf, *L'Alliance ouvrière*, pp. 390-395. [p. [101](#)]
45. *Ibid.*, pp. 311 ff., 415 ff. [p. [101](#)]
46. See above, pp. 121 ff. [p. [102](#)]
47. See above., p. 97. [p. [102](#)]
48. Carr and Davies, *Foundations*, vol. I, part 2, p. 977, and Grosskopf, *L'Alliance ouvrière*, Table 141, p. 244. [p. [102](#)]
49. See above, pp. 106-107. [p. [102](#)]
50. *Report of the 15th Congress*, p. 368. [p. [103](#)]
51. A great deal of weight needs to be given to the problem referred to here. It was, in fact, underestimation of the potentialities that the farms of the poor and middle peasants possessed for several years yet that contributed to impelling the Soviet government to undertake a collectivization that was ill-prepared politically and ideologically, and which it saw as the only way of escape from the supposed exhaustion of the possibility of still increasing agricultural production for a certain period without resort to an improvised revolution in agrarian structures. It should be noted that the thesis of "exhaustion of possibilities for growth in agriculture" in the conditions of 1928 was explicitly affirmed at that time (see the resolution adopted on July 10, 1928, by the plenum of the CC, in *K.P.S.S. v rezolyutsiyakh*, vol. 2, pp. 391 ff.), and that it is still defended in the Soviet Union. Chapters IX and X

of V. Yakovtsevsky, *Agrarnye otnosheniya v periode stroitelstva sotsializma*. A French translation of these chapters appeared in *Recherches internationales*, no. 85 (no. 4 of 1975),

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- pp. 55 ff. On the theses of the "exhaustion" of NEP agriculture and the urgent "economic necessity" of collectivization, see pp. 56-59. [p. 103]
52. Grosskopf, *L'Alliance ouvrière*, p. 238 ff., 377. [p. 103]
53. I. B. Messner, "Predposylki planovogo razvitiya mekhanizatsii selskogo khozyaistva," in *Planovoye Khozyaistvo*, no. 8 (1927), p. 54. [p. 104]
54. M. P. Oganovsky, "Maksimalny variant perspektivnogo plana rekonstruktsii selskogo khozyaistva," in *Planovoye Khozyaistvo*, no. 7 (1927), p. 37, quoted in Grosskopf, *L'Alliance ouvrière*, p. 377. [p. 104]
55. The concept of the "net balance" is explained below. [p. 104]
56. Grosskopf, *L'Alliance ouvrière*, pp. 113, 122. [p. 104]
57. Osvo's forecasts are quoted from *ibid.*, p. 351. The cultivated areas, yields and marketable shares have been calculated from the same source. Actually, increases in yield are usually accompanied by a more than proportionate increase in the share of production marketed. [p. 104]
58. *Report of the 15th Congress*, p. 376. [p. 105]
59. *Ibid.*, p. 365. [p. 105]
60. See volume I of the present book, p. 487 ff., especially p. 488. On this point see also Grosskopf, *L'Alliance ouvrière*, pp. 156-159. [p. 106]
61. *Report of the 15th Congress*, p. 372. [p. 106]
62. *K.P.S.S. v rezolyutsiyakh*, vol. I, pp. 666-667, 851. [p. 106]
63. Lenin, "[The Tax in Kind](#)" (April 21, 1921), in *CW*, vol. 32, p. 349. [p. 106]
64. Yakovlev, ed., *K voprosu*, pp. 175, 184, 255, 284. [p. 107]
65. *Ibid.*, pp. 212-213, 222-224, 236, 256, and the remarks of Grosskopf, *L'Alliance ouvrière*, pp. 292-295. [p. 107]
66. Yakovlev, ed., *K voprosu*, pp. 59, 236-237; Rosnitsky, *Litso derevni*, pp. 70-74; N. Baryshev, "Novye zavoyevaniya derevenskoy bednoty," in *Na Agrarnom Fronte*, no. 9 (1928), p. 75. [p. 107]
67. A. Nove, *An Economic History of the U.S.S.R.*, p. 186. [p. 109]
68. A. Mendelson, ed., *Pokazateli konyunkturi narodnogo khozyaistva SSSR za 1923-1924 --1928-1929 gg.*, p. 51. [p. 110]
69. *Ibid.* [p. 110]
70. *Planovoye Khozyaistvo*, no. 5 (1929), pp. 61-65; and no. 10, p. 94. [p. 110]
71. A. Nove, *Economic History*, p. 186. [p. 110]
72. M. Lewin, "Taking Grain: Soviet Policies of Agricultural Pro-

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curement before the War," in C. Abramsky and Beryl G. Williams, eds., *Essays in Honour of E. H. Carr*. [p. 111]

- According to the estimates published by Gosplan in 1929 and 1931, the
73. index of agricultural production (with 1927-1928 as 100) reached its maximum in 1926-1927 (with 101.1, in prices of that year), and fell to 90.3 in 1930 (Zaleski, *Planning*, p. 387). According to *Narodnoye Khozyaistvo 1958 g.*, p. 350, agricultural production touched bottom in 1933 (when it was 18.5 percent lower than in 1928). However, the Gosplan estimates published in *Sotsialisticheskoye Stroitelstvo SSSR* (1936), pp. 232-233, and Zaleski's calculations (*Planning*), show the lowest level of agricultural production as being reached in 1932, when it was 15.6 percent less than in 1926-1927. The NEP level of agricultural production was not to be regularly surpassed until after the Second World War, after 1948 (and for products of animal husbandry, not until 1953). See *Narodnoye Khozyaistvo*

- 1958 g., p. 350. [p. [111](#)]
74. This net balance might in some cases be less than the amount of the procurement, in particular when part of the grain procured had to be returned to villages or agricultural regions that had a grain deficit. It must not be confused with the total amount of the grain harvest that was marketed, as this figure included sales made inside the village. The question of the net agricultural "surplus" is dealt with later (see below, p. 157). [p. [111](#)]
75. See the figures given in *Materialy osobogo soveshchaniya po vosproizvodstvu osnovnogo kapitala pri prezidiume V.S.N.Kh., seriya III, vypusk II: perspektivy razvitiya selskogo khozyaistva*, p. 86, quoted in Grosskopf, *L'Alliance ouvrière*, p. 346. [p. [111](#)]
76. Between 1913 and 1926-1927 the rural population had risen from 114.6 to 120.7 million, an increase of 5.3 percent (*Narodnoye Khozyaistvo 1958 g.*, p. 9). [p. [112](#)]
77. A. E. Lositsky, "Perspektivy potrebleniya prodovolstvennykh produktov v Soyuze," in *Planovoye Khozyaistvo*, no. 4 (1927), pp. 89-90, quoted in Grosskopf, *L'Alliance ouvrière*, pp. 170, 174. [p. [112](#)]
78. Calculated from the source given in [note 15](#). [p. [112](#)]
79. Calculated from figures in Grosskopf, *L'Alliance ouvrière*, p. 351. [p. [112](#)]
80. *Kontrolnye tsifry 1929-1930 gg.*, p. 538. [p. [112](#)]
81. Stalin, *Works*, vol. 11, p. 215. [Transcriber's Note: See Stalin's "[Results of the July Plenum of the C.C., C.P.S.U.\(B.\)](#)". -- DJR] [p. [112](#)]

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82. K. Bryukhanov, "Itogi khlebnoy kampanii 1928-1929g.," in *Ekonomicheskoye Obozreniye*, XI, p. 134, quoted in Grosskopf, *L'Alliance ouvrière*, p. 337. [p. [112](#)]
83. Ibid. See also O. Narkiewicz, "Soviet Administration and the Grain Crisis of 1927-1928," in *Soviet Studies* (October 1968), pp. 237 ff. [p. [112](#)]
84. This reduction in exports as compared with prewar was due to the increased standard of consumption of the masses. [p. [113](#)]
85. *Narodnoye Khozyaistvo* (1932), p. xlviii. [p. [113](#)]
86. Mikoyan, in *Bolshevik*, no. 15 (1928), p. 16. [p. [113](#)]
87. Value in current prices (*Narodnoye Khozyaistvo* [1932], p. xlviii). [p. [113](#)]
88. P. G. Timofeyev, *Ekonomicheskaya geografya SSSR*, p. 263, quoted in Grosskopf, *L'Alliance ouvrière*, p. 340. [p. [113](#)]
89. Stalin, *Works*, vol. 11, p. 51. [Transcriber's Note: See Stalin's "[The Work of the April Joint Plenum of the Central Committee and Central Control Commission](#)". -- DJR] [p. [115](#)]
90. Ibid., vol. 11, p. 19 [Transcriber's Note: See Stalin's "[First Results of the Procurement Campaign and the Further Tasks of the Party](#)". -- DJR]; see also above, p. 40. [p. [115](#)]
91. Ibid., vol. 11, p. 215. [p. [116](#)]
92. *K.P.S.S. v rezolyutsiyakh*, vol. 2, p. 395. [p. [116](#)]
93. The struggles within the Party will be discussed in Part 4. [p. [116](#)]
94. Stalin, *Works*, vol. 12, p. 65. [Transcriber's Note: See Stalin's "[The Right Deviation in the C.P.S.U.\(B.\)](#)". -- DJR] [p. [116](#)]
95. Wolf in *Planovoye Khozyaistvo*, no. 2 (1929), pp. 99-100; and Vishnesky in *Na Agrarnom Fronte*, no. 10 (1928). [p. [117](#)]
96. Between 1928 and 1929 the number of cattle fell by nearly 1.7 million, to 68 million, and that of pigs by nearly 5 million, to under 21 million (*Kontrolnye tsifry 1929-1930 gg.*, pp. 530-531). [p. [117](#)]
97. Stalin, *Works*, vol. 11, p. 275. [Transcriber's Note: See Stalin's "[Industrialisation of the Country and the Right Deviation in the C.P.S.U.\(B.\)](#)". -- DJR] [p. [118](#)]

98. "Obshchiye nachala zemlepolzovaniya i zemleustroistva," in *Kollektivizatsiya Sotsialisticheskogo Khozyaistva*, doc. no. 20; quoted in Lewin, *Russian Peasants*, p. 283. [p. 118]
99. See volume I of the present work, pp. 235 ff. [p. 118]
100. Stalin's report, November 1, 1926, to the Fifteenth Party Conference, in *Works*, vol. 8, p. 296. [Transcriber's Note: See Stalin's "[The Social-Democratic Deviation in Our Party](#)". -- DJR] [p. 119]
101. When he wrote: "Our Party relies on two classes and therefore its instability would be possible and its downfall inevitable if there were no agreement between those two classes" (Lenin, *CW*, vol. 36, p. 594 [Transcriber's Note: See Lenin's "[Letter to the Congress](#)". -- DJR]; on this point see p. 323 of volume I of the present work). [p. 119]
102. Lewin, *Russian Peasants*, pp. 284, 372 ff. [p. 119]
103. Ibid., pp. 285-286. Lewin quotes from *Bolshevik*, no. 19 (1928), pp. 20, 26. [p. 120]

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104. Ibid., p. 287. [p. 120]
105. *Pravda*, January 26, 1929; *Na Agrarnom Fronte*, no. 7 (1929). See also Carr and Davies, *Foundations*, vol. I, pt. 1, pp. 258-259. [p. 121]
106. This mistrust went back a long way. It was expressed also in certain statements by Stalin at various periods before the crisis of 1928-1929 (see below, pp. 560-561). [p. 121]
107. *Shestnadtsataya Konferentsiya VKP(b)* (1962), p.320, quoted in Carr and Davies, *Foundations*, vol. I, pt. 1, pp. 256-257. [p. 121]
108. *K.P.S.S. v rezolyutsiyakh*, vol. 2, pp. 456-457. [p. 122]
109. See below, pp. 455 ff. [p. 122]
110. See above, pp. 109 ff. [p. 123]
111. See above, p. 38. [p. 123]
112. A. L. Angarov, *Klassovaya borba v sovetskoy derevne*, pp. 20 ff., and Lewin, *Russian Peasants*, pp. 390 ff. [p. 124]
113. Lewin, *Russian Peasants*, pp. 389-390; *The Penal Code of the R.S.F.S.R.* (text of 1926, with amendments up to December 1, 1932). [p. 124]
114. *Kollektivizatsiya Sotsialisticheskogo Khozyaistva*, doc. no. 49. [p. 125]
115. Lenin, *CW*, vol. 29, p. 159. [Transcriber's Note: See Lenin's "[Eighth Congress of the R.C.P.\(B.\)](#)". -- DJR] [p. 125]
116. Lewin, *Russian Peasants*, p. 393. [p. 126]
117. See below, p. 458. [p. 126]

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2. The economic and social conditions procedures of economic planning transformation of production relations

in agriculture during the NEP

Once "war communism" had been abandoned, the transformation into commodities of a large part of agricultural production, together with the peasants' need to buy on the market nearly all their implements and a large proportion of the consumer goods they required, had the effect of causing the reproduction of production relations in agriculture to depend heavily upon the conditions governing the circulation of commodities.

Under the NEP the system of production for the market and the supply of goods to the rural areas, and particularly the relative levels of agricultural and industrial prices, were therefore to exert a far-reaching influence on the reproduction and transformation of production relations in agriculture. They affected the structure of production and brought about a series of *class consequences*, weakening or strengthening differentially the various strata of the peasantry and categories of producers. The systems of production for the market, of sale and purchase, together with industrial and agricultural prices, constituted a totality of social relations the characteristics and transformations of which were, for their part, subject to the overall effects of the class struggles in general and, in particular, to those of the political line adopted by the Bolshevik Party and the way this line was implemented. The line was materialized in the shape of "price policy" and "planning." In these planes, the class struggles developing among the peasantry became linked with the class struggles between the proletariat and the various sections of the bourgeoisie, and this

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is why it is important to analyze the conditions under which agricultural products entered into circulation, and also the conditions governing the supply of industrial goods to the peasantry.

I. Preliminary remarks

During the NEP period the changes that the class struggles brought about in exchange conditions had a considerable influence on the concrete practice of the worker-peasant alliance and on the differential class effects of this practice, and especially on relations between the poor, middle, and rich peasants.

Analyzing the social conditions of exchange means also revealing the characteristic features of the economic practices in which the various agents of the exchange processes were involved, and the constraints to which they were subject. These constraints were themselves bound up with the totality of class relations and practices. Whether they assumed the appearance of constraints "exercised by the market" or of "regulatory" constraints, they always possessed an ideological dimension, and this usually played a dominant role. Ideological relations subordinated exchange, in a way not always directly "visible," to the effects of the class struggles, including those struggles which were fought out on the ideological level.

(a) The "constraints" upon buying and selling

Later we shall see, in concrete terms, how these various constraints operated. In order, however, to make clear from the start what is meant, it may be useful to give some indications. The reader will recall, for example, that during most of the NEP period the degree to which the majority of the poor and middle peasants participated in exchange, and the ways in which they did this, were determined by a combination of economic, ideological, and political constraints. These were

the constraints which obliged them to dispose rapidly of the greater part of the products they marketed, thereby receiving prices much less advantageous than those which the rich peasants were able to obtain some months later. The constraints which were thus brought to bear upon the majority of the poor and middle peasants -- and which constituted one of the factors in the "information of market prices" -- were due not only to the taxes they had to pay and to their indebtedness (repayment of loans obtained from rich peasants) but also to ideological and political relations in which they were integrated.

On the one hand, there was at the beginning of the NEP no apparatus of coercion capable of forcing the poor and middle peasants as a whole to pay their taxes and repay their debts, and, above all, to do so quickly. The "constraint," which at that time weighed upon the peasant masses, was essentially ideological; it was constituted by the peasants' integration into ideological relations which made them see it a duty to settle their tax and debt obligations quickly and forbade them to undertake collective actions to escape from the exigencies of their creditors and of the fiscal authority. On the other hand, these same ideological relations -- profoundly different in this respect from those to which the mass of peasants had been subject before the revolution -- encouraged them to increase their production to market in order to equip their farms better, even that part of their crops required to satisfy their "physiological needs." Lenin noted this in the autumn of 1922, when he said that:

the overwhelming majority of the population of Russia are small peasants, who have now thrown themselves into production with extraordinary zeal, and have achieved (partly owing to the assistance the government has given them by way of seed, etc.) enormous, almost incredible success, particularly if we bear in mind the unprecedented devastation caused by the Civil war, the famine and so forth. The small peasants have been so successful that *they delivered the state tax amounting to hundreds of millions of poods of grain with extraordinary ease, and almost without any coercion.*^[1]

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The ideological relations in which the peasant masses were integrated in the NEP period, and which largely determined the way they participated in exchange, were extremely complex in nature, and changed as the years went by.

At the outset of the NEP an essential element in these ideological relations was the confidence which the peasant masses felt in the Soviet government's will to help them and improve their lot. This confidence accounted for the "ease" with which the peasant masses, though poor, paid their taxes, and the speed with which they sold part of their production so as to meet this kind of obligation. That same confidence, combined with their idea of what was needed in order to improve their lot, also led them to sell even what might have been considered "necessary" for their own consumption, so as to be able to buy new means of production.^[2] Indeed, "the poorest peasants sold . . . most of what they produced not so much under the pressure of taxation as for the purpose of acquiring manufactured goods."^[3] This was a "constraint to sell" which resulted from class ideological relations, in particular from relations which stimulated the poor and middle peasants not to go on accepting their lot as "fate" but to escape from kulak domination by *equipping* and, to a lesser extent, by *organizing* themselves. This was one of the objective bases of the dynamism of NEP agriculture.^[4] It was also one of the forms of the participation of the peasantry in exchange, forms which exercised a certain effect on the actual conditions of exchange, especially as regards the selling prices of agricultural goods and the fluctuation of these prices. These prices were also bound up with class relations, both because those relations determined the conditions of production (what was produced, and the cost of this production in terms of labor) and the conditions of exchange.

Toward the end of the NEP period, especially from 1928 on, the system of "constraints to

sell" affecting agricultural produce underwent change. On the one hand, the apparatus of coercion present in the countryside was strengthened. It intervened in a real way, first in order to secure the payment of taxes, and then to secure the deliveries required under the

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system of "planned contracts" (I shall come back to this point) or the "emergency measures." On the other hand, the frequently experienced shortage of industrial goods in the rural areas caused the poor and middle peasants to become more hesitant about selling their produce, since they were not sure of being able to buy the means of production and the consumer goods they needed. The procurement crisis of 1928 and 1929 can therefore be analyzed only if we take account of the changes in the ideological and political relations to which the different strata of the peasantry were then subject.

(b) The class effects of the "price policy"

During the NEP, as we shall see, prices were in part "free" and in part "fixed administratively." Actually, even "free" prices depended very largely on measures taken by the state -- on the magnitude of its purchases and sales, and on the level of costs of production in state-owned industrial enterprises. Thus, prices, which affected the conditions of reproduction in agriculture, were in considerable measure the result of the over all policy followed by the Soviet government. This policy, therefore, produced *class effects*: it was a *particular form of the class struggle*, connected especially with the development of this struggle at the level of the state machine and the ruling Party.

The *actual* class effects of the "price policy" could be very different from those *expected* by the Party leadership. This observation is especially important in relation to the NEP period, when the class effects of the social conditions governing exchange often differed from the effects that had been expected or aimed at. Analysis of the social conditions of exchange must endeavor to discover the *reasons* for such differences.

In the NEP period these differences resulted from the weakness of the ties that linked the ruling Party with broad sections of the masses (mainly the peasant masses). They also resulted from the weakness of the theoretical analyses carried out by the Party, being themselves consequences of *misun-*

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derstanding due to ideology -- and so, of class ideological relations. This can be seen clearly if we study the way in which relations developed between town and country, and the class contradictions fostered by this development, contradictions which came to a head in the final crisis of the NEP.

II. The conversion of agricultural produce into money

A study of the overall evolution of the exchange of agricultural produce and the conditions under which this exchange took place enables us to perceive the influence exerted by exchange conditions upon class relations and upon the final crisis of the NEP.

(a) The overall evolution of the exchange of

*agricultural produce and the economic
and social significance of this exchange*

The way in which the exchange of agricultural produce evolved, compared with the way agricultural production evolved, shows the extent to which the peasant farms were linked with the market -- the extent to which these farms had moved from a subsistence economy to one linked with the Soviet, or even the world, market. It is to be noted that in the course of the NEP period the connection between the peasant economy and the market developed rapidly. Even by 1923-1924 this connection had increased as compared with the prerevolutionary period. This fact refutes an opinion which is rather widely held to the effect that the agrarian revolution, by multiplying small farms, had resulted in an increase in subsistence farming.

Already in 1923-1924 the *total marketed share* of agricultural production was 25 percent larger than prewar, and during the following years this progress continued.^[5] As regards grain, which possessed decisive importance, the total

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marketed share came to 36.1 percent in 1924-1925, compared with 32 percent in 1913.^[6] From the political and social standpoint, we need to note that, in the chief grain-producing areas, the total marketed share of the grain produced was higher in the case of the poor peasant farms than in that of the farms of the well-to-do or rich peasants, which explains why the fluctuations in agricultural prices, especially grain prices, and the forms of marketing, were so important for the less prosperous sections of the peasantry.

Another noteworthy point is that the net marketed share of agricultural production^[7] increase more slowly than the gross marketed share. Thus, in 1924-1925 the net marketing of agricultural produce (corresponding to what was called the "agricultural balance") was, in absolute figures, 46.6 percent less than prewar.^[8] *As a whole, the agricultural balance tended to increase a little faster than gross agricultural production;* but this was not so in the case of grain (the prices for which evolved in a way that was not very favorable to the peasants), a fact that had important economic consequences and contributed to the final crisis of the NEP.^[9]

*(b) The participants in the exchange of
agricultural produce*

A study of the principal *direct participants* in exchange is necessary if we are to understand some of the contradictions which exploded toward the end of the NEP period.

A fundamental aspect of the exchange of agricultural produce under the NEP was that *an important fraction of those who sold this produce consisted of poor and middle peasants who were obliged to buy later on (in the same farming year) more or less substantial amounts of the same produce that they themselves had sold previously.* Since they were usually obliged to make their purchases at prices higher than those they had received, these operations signified for them *a loss of real income.* Such operations were forced upon them by their need to obtain money as soon as possible after the harvest, so as to repay their debts, buy indispensable manufactured

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goods, and pay their taxes. Their subsequent purchases of produce similar to what they had themselves previously sold were often effected with money obtained by means of *auxiliary activities*, or by *contracting fresh debts.* At the beginning of the NEP, about one-fifth of the wheat marketed was sold in this way by peasants who had later to buy wheat in order to meet

their needs as consumers.

Those who bought agricultural produce directly, and the prices they paid, were also very diverse. A section of the buyers consisted of the peasants themselves: some bought produce for their own consumption, while others (mainly rich peasants) bought produce in order to sell it later at higher prices.^[10]

The nonpeasant purchasers of agricultural produce were private traders, state and cooperative organizations, and individuals who came to buy in the peasant markets. In 1924-1925 these groups of purchasers absorbed 28, 37.1, and 34.9 per cent, respectively, of this part of market production.^[11] In the years that followed, the share accounted for by private traders fell rapidly.

Throughout the NEP period the Soviet government strove to develop the activity of the state and cooperative purchasing organs, in particular to ensure so far as possible the regular provision of supplies for the towns, the army, industry, and foreign trade, and to reduce fluctuations in prices for the consumer. The operations carried out by these organs were based mainly on purchasing plans, and their fulfillment constituted what was called "planned procurement" of agricultural produce (though some of the purchases made by the state and cooperative organs might not, in fact, be "planned").

III. The supply of industrial goods to the peasantry

Supplying industrial goods to the peasantry played an essential part in the reproduction of the material and social

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conditions of agricultural production. In order to ensure the continuity of their production, the peasants had to be able to obtain, at a price compatible with what they received when they sold their own produce, the articles they needed to provide their farms with means of production and to cover that part of their consumption which was not covered by agricultural produce. The circulation thus realized had also to ensure a certain equilibrium between the ebb and flow of cash. To this end it was necessary that the net cash receipts of the country dwellers should, taking one year with another, be convertible into town-made goods, once taxes payable in cash had been discharged and such savings as the peasants were disposed to make had been provided for.

The first problem that arose in this connection was that of ensuring a satisfactory supply of industrial goods for the countryside.

In the NEP period this supply might come from a variety of sources. It could be provided by private industry or by state-owned industry, and it could originate in the towns or in the countryside itself. Indeed, a substantial proportion of private industry was at that time accounted for by rural handicrafts. Their existence was a source of difficulty for the state sector. On the one hand, they enabled the countryside to survive, to some extent, without the towns, whereas the towns could not survive without the countryside. On the other, the prices at which the rural craftsmen could supply consumers' requirements set an upper limit to the prices at which state industry could sell its own products -- unless it managed to control the provision of supplies to rural industry so as to keep within strict limits the competition coming from the latter.

(a) Private industry and rural handicrafts

The measures taken at the start of the NEP made possible a relatively large-scale revival of the activity of rural crafts. These crafts (which were destined to disappear during the 1930s) were of great importance to the peasantry. They provided *a large proportion of the peasants' consumption of*

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manufactured goods: implements, building materials, consumer goods (textiles, clothing, pottery, footwear, canned food, etc.). Furthermore, they ensured incomes not to be frowned on to a large number of poor and middle peasants who spent part of their time working as craftsmen, and, through the sale of craft products in the towns, they were a source of cash receipts for the rural sector.

Toward the end of the NEP period, "small-scale industry" employed 4.4 million people, or about 60 percent of the total number of workers in industry. Nearly 3.6 million of these workers belonged to craft production units in the villages,^[12] and *90 percent of them were also peasants*. In 1926 fewer than one-tenth of these rural craftsmen were organized in officially recognized cooperatives. Approximately another tenth were organized in "unofficial" cooperatives. The rest were "independent" craftsmen. Actually, those craftsmen who did not work for a local clientele but for a distant market were often dependent, in this period, upon private traders -- the "Nepmen." The Soviet economist Larin estimated that in 1927 one-quarter of the craftsmen's gross production was more or less controlled by private capital,^[13] which came on the scene either to buy up part of the craftsmen's production in order to sell it in other localities, or else to sell raw materials to the craftsmen. Though Larin's estimate is doubtless exaggerated, it remains true that a section of those who were classified as rural craftsmen were, in reality, dependent on private capital. This situation was to a large extent the consequence of the *poor functioning of state commercial organs*.

During the NEP the Bolshevik Party was, in principle, in favor of the rural crafts, which it wished to guide to an increasing degree along the path of cooperation. The resolution adopted by the Fifteenth Party Congress (December 1927), laying down directives for the preparation of the Five-Year Plan, still stressed the role to be played by the craftsmen. This resolution stated that the crafts must be developed as a *necessary complement to large-scale industry, as a means of eliminating the shortage of goods and of reducing unemployment*.

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This orientation, in principle favorable to the crafts -- especially the rural crafts -- went on being reaffirmed down to the end of 1929. In that year it was still being emphasized that, in a number of branches of industry, *the crafts made it possible to obtain large quantities of goods while requiring very much smaller investments than large-scale industry*.^[14] Thus, for the production of footwear, the crafts needed only one tenth as much investment for the same volume of production. Actually, the crafts came up against increasing hostility from the heads of large-scale state industry: the latter saw in the craftsmen so many competitors for markets, supplies, and credits, and they often contrived to ensure that supplies to craftsmen provided by the state's commercial organs were kept at the minimum.

Nineteen twenty-nine, the "year of great change," was also the year of the downfall of the crafts and of rural industry. Thereafter, the maximum of material and financial resources were concentrated on large-scale industry, which also drained away the labor force available for the crafts. The rapid decline of rural industry entailed a series of negative consequences for country life, affecting the supply of goods and the incomes of the countryfolk.

Nevertheless, until the end of the NEP, the existence of rural handicrafts and, more broadly, of small-scale private industry, constituted an important aspect of the social conditions governing production and exchange. But this aspect came more and more into contradiction with the policy followed from 1928 on, and this contradiction, too, was to manifest itself in the final crisis of the NEP.^[15]

(b) Retail trade in industrial goods in the rural areas

The rural areas were supplied with industrial goods not only by the rural craftsmen but also by state and cooperative trade and by private trade. Down to 1926-1927 the turnover of private trade was increasing in absolute terms, even though declining relatively. In 1928 the closing of a number of shops

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and stalls and the canceling of many pedlars' licenses brought about its decline, both absolute and relative.^[16] In the rural areas this decline was such that it was far from offset by the increased sales of the state and cooperative sector.^[17]

In all events, in 1928 state and cooperative trade was far less developed in the countryside than in the towns. The official network of retail trade made less than 34 percent of its turnover in the villages, though that was where more than 80 percent of the Soviet population lived.^[18]

Thus, during most of the NEP period (and, to an even greater extent than before, toward the end of the period) the peasants were at a great disadvantage regarding opportunities for obtaining industrial goods of urban origin. Furthermore, the necessity of getting their supplies largely from private traders helped to reduce the peasantry's "purchasing power." While the private traders sometimes paid prices for some of the agricultural produce they bought higher than those paid by the "official" organs, they sold industrial goods at prices that were a great deal higher than those charged by state and cooperative suppliers. In 1927 the prices of cotton goods prevailing in the sphere of private trade exceeded by more than 19 percent those charged by the state organs. The differences amounted to nearly 57 percent for salt, 14 percent for kerosene, and nearly 23 percent for nails.^[19] Naturally, if the peasants paid such high prices to private traders, the reason was that the state and cooperative network was unable to meet their demands.

The closing of many private shops from 1928 on did not improve matters for the peasants, given the increasing shortage of industrial goods and the inability of the official trade network to quickly take the place of the private traders who had been eliminated. In November 1928 a Soviet economic journal depicted the situation, pointing out that the shortage of industrial goods was even worse than that of agricultural produce:

There are enormous queues. . . . The demand being huge, no more than 20-30 percent can be covered by the supply. . . . The

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same applies to leather goods and to footwear. . . . There is no roof iron. . . . On the textile market a great tension prevails. The peasants go to the towns for goods, stand in queues. . . . Peasants produce receipts acknowledging deliveries of grain ranging from 50 to 500 poods; they would each of them buy 100-200 roubles' worth of industrial commodities, but all they are given is 20 roubles' worth. . . .^[20]

From 1928 on the disorganization of the trade network and the "goods famine," as it was

called at the time, thus contributed considerably to the procurement crisis, and then to the final crisis of the NEP.

IV. The conditions governing the fixing of purchase prices for agricultural produce, and the problem of the "scissors"

The relative movement of agricultural and industrial prices was an essential factor in the changes affecting reproduction in agriculture.

The role played by the problem of the "scissors"^[21] in the destiny of the NEP leads us to study the way in which the state intervened, or refrained from intervening, in the determination of agricultural prices.

(a) The conditions governing the fixing of purchase prices for agricultural produce

During most of the NEP period the prices at which agricultural produce was purchased were, in principle, "market prices" -- in the sense that the peasants were not "legally obliged" to surrender part of their production to the procurement organs at a price fixed one-sidedly by the Soviet government. *In fact*, the conditions under which the purchase prices paid by

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the procurement organs were established were subject to considerable variation.

Generally speaking, *where the principal agricultural products destined for industrial processing were concerned* (cotton, flax, sugarbeet, etc.), *the state organs were almost the only purchasers*. These organs thus held a sort of monopoly in the purchase of these products.^[22] This situation enabled them to buy at prices that were particularly favorable to them. However, *agricultural policy was at that time aimed at developing technical crops*, and so relatively high purchase prices were fixed for them, so as to encourage their development, and this procedure did indeed result in a rapid increase in the production of technical crops. In a number of regions this proved advantageous mainly to the rich peasants, who were in the best position to cultivate these crops.

During the NEP the conditions under which the official trading organizations fixed prices varied a great deal. At first, they were authorized to negotiate "freely" the prices at which they would buy agricultural produce. Nevertheless, these prices had to be between a "ceiling" and a "floor" fixed by the central trade organs. The latter altered their prices each year, and varied them as between different regions. Later, this system was gradually *replaced by a system of contracts (kontraktatsiya)* which were negotiated between the state organs and the peasants at the beginning of the "campaign." These contracts became elements in the purchasing plan of the state organs. They specified the quantities to be supplied by the peasants, the prices, the quality, the delivery dates, and so on. In return, the state organs undertook to grant certain credits and to ensure the supply of certain means of production. The prices paid for purchases made under these conditions were called "convention prices," since they were, in principle, "negotiated" between the peasants and the state organs. However, the latter had to work from a "basic price" which was fixed each year by Narkomtorg for the various products and regions. The "convention prices" actually paid might be between 5 and 10 percent above or below the

"basic price."^[23] For products other than grain the "basic price" was usually

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fixed at a high level so as not to discourage production, and to prevent too considerable a share of this production finding its way into the handicraft sector (this applied especially to wool and skins).

The procurement organs had not only to fulfill their plan as regards quantity, they had also to operate in such a way as to contribute to *keeping prices as stable as possible*. This task was especially important where grain was concerned, since grain prices had a serious bearing on the *cost of living* and the level of *real wages*. In the last years of the NEP this task was given greater and greater priority, and the prices paid for grain procured tended to be lower than "market" prices.^[24]

The development of this tendency undermined the worker-peasant alliance. It was all the more harmful because it was above all the poor and middle peasants who were affected by the low prices imposed by the procurement organs: generally, indeed, it was the least well-off of the peasants, who, already in the autumn, sold directly to the state organs a large part of the produce they took to market.

The overall effect of this price policy was not only detrimental to the firmness of the worker-peasant alliance, but also *unfavorable to grain production*. Combined with the poor supply of industrial goods to the rural areas, it was to contribute to the explosion of the final crisis of the NEP.

The contradictions in which the "agricultural price policy" was caught were reflected in the frequent changes made in the conditions governing the fixing of the prices at which the state organs bought various products, and in the treatment of the private traders who competed with the procurement organs.

For most products of agriculture the state organs began by fixing mainly "convention"^[25] or "negotiated" (*soglasitelnye*) prices which took fairly direct account of the prices prevailing in the private sector. Later, they fixed mainly "firm" (*tyordy*) prices, which were lower than those paid in the private sector. The role of these "firm" prices increased more and more, and the state sought to lower them, especially in the case of grain in 1926-1927.^[26]

Subsequently, partial upward readjustments of procurement

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prices were decided on. However, these readjustments were limited, so that *the gap tended to grow, all the same*, between the "market" prices (which increased rapidly) and the procurement prices (which, moreover, lagged behind increases in the costs of production).^[27] This was one of the immediate causes of the growing difficulties in procurement and an important factor in triggering off the final crisis of the NEP.

Under these conditions, for want of being able to organize procurement better and reduce the expenditure connected with it, the Soviet government was led -- with a view to stabilizing as much as possible the prices at which it supplied the towns, and to having at its disposal quantities of grain that would not shrink catastrophically -- to restrict further and further, and eventually to eliminate altogether, all private trade in grain. Along with this move, the contract system (*kontraktatsiya*) was also used to an increasing extent for the procurement of grain.

In the last years of NEP the Soviet government made these "contracts" obligatory in practice.

This meant that they were no longer more than nominally "contracts."^[28] In fact, thereafter, what the peasants had to deliver largely amounted to *compulsory deliveries*. The NEP, which was supposed to leave it to the peasants to dispose of that part of their production which they did not need for their own subsistence or to pay the agricultural tax, was now virtually abandoned, and under conditions which led to the adoption of measures of constraint from which the peasants tried to escape. Consequently, instead of isolating the rich peasants, these measures helped to ensure that a growing number of peasants tended to unite in order to resist what they saw as measures of requisition.

(b) The "scissors" disparity between agricultural and industrial prices

The policy followed by the Bolshevik Party in the matter of the evolution of agricultural in comparison with industrial prices was, in principle, one aimed at reducing the prices of

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industrial goods and "closing the scissors."^[29] Such a policy was necessary if the worker-peasant alliance was to be consolidated, and if agriculture was to develop on the basis of its own forces. A judicious application of this policy would enable the poor and middle peasants to strengthen their positions in relation to the rich peasants, to equip their farms better, and to organize themselves, with the Party's aid. The following figures show that this policy appears to have achieved considerable positive results between 1923 (a year when the scissors were wide open, in favor of industrial prices^[30]) and 1928:

*Ratio of agricultural prices
to retail prices of industrial goods ^[31]*

1913	100.0		
1923-1924	33.7	1927-1928	79.0
1925-1926	71.8	1928-1929	90.3
1926-1927	71.1	1929-1930	76.9

These figures inspire the following comments:

1. In 1923-1924 the "purchasing power" of agricultural products had been reduced to about one-third of what it was before the war.
2. Between 1923-1924 and 1927-1928 the "purchasing power" of agricultural products appears to have been multiplied by 2.3.
3. The same line of progress seems to have continued in 1928-1929, when the ratio shown by the index was only 10 percent short of what it had been prewar.
4. In 1929-1930 the situation was sharply overturned, with the index falling below the level it had reached in 1927-1928.

Some corrections need to be made to this picture:

1. The way that the situation of the poor and middle peasants evolved cannot be judged from these figures alone. Most of them enjoyed a situation that was definitely better than before the war, since they had more land. After 1923 they improved their situation still further, by increasing the proportion of land they held.

2. While grain production was crucially important, the peasants who produced mainly grain were particularly disfa-

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vored by the evolution of the ratio between prices for grain delivered to the procurement organs (the principal buyers of the grain produced by the poor peasants) and the retail prices of industrial products. This evolution proceeded as follows:

*Ratio of prices of grain procured by the state
to retail industrial prices* ^[32]

1913 ^[33]	100.0		
1923-1924	29.1	1927-1928	65.2
1925-1926	68.7	1928-1929	76.1
1926-1927	56.6	1929-1930	76.9 ^[34]

3. The unfavorable effects of the high level of industrial prices were felt seriously by those peasants who had to buy from private traders, since the latter charged especially high prices. Thus, in December 1927, the retail prices of industrial products exceeded the 1913 level by 88 percent in the "official" (state and cooperative) sector, but by 140 percent in the private sector. ^[35]

In order to present a more concrete picture of the relative price levels, here are the quantities of various products obtained by the peasants in 1927 in exchange for the price that the procurement organs paid *for one hundredweight of rye*.^[36]

Quantities obtained in 1927

	<i>In the cooperative sector</i>	<i>In the private sector</i>	<i>In 1913</i>
Textiles (meters)	12.99	10.91	23.72
Sugar (kilograms)	7.65	7.45	14.60
Kerosene (kilograms)	44.25	38.75	41.53
Salt (kilograms)	135.5	86.5	165.8
Nails (kilograms)	16.90	13.77	24.36

4. For the period from 1928 on it is not sufficient to consider merely the evolution of agricultural and industrial prices. To confine oneself to this means giving a falsely "embellished" picture of the peasants' situation. From that date, in fact, a large proportion of the peasants' cash income could

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no longer, in practice, be exchanged for industrial products, owing to the "goods famine" that prevailed at the time, especially in the countryside.^[37] This situation, which had already been experienced in the winter of 1925-1926, was severely detrimental to the poorest peasants and those whose holdings were least well equipped, as they could not improve their equipment and so remained dependent on the rich peasants.

To sum up, the policy of closing the scissors enjoyed comparative success down to 1927. Thereafter a "skid" occurred, parallel with the "procurement crisis" and partly accounting for the latter. This "skid" was a consequence of the mistakes made after 1926-1927 in the orientation of industrial policy, as regards both current production and investments. It revealed

that, in the concrete conditions in which it was then situated, the Soviet government did not possess that "power to control prices" which it supposed itself to wield. The sudden confrontation with this truth, combined with the increasing predominance of conceptions that were unfavorable to the NEP, led to the development of the "emergency measures," the deepening of crisis phenomena, and, finally, the complete and unprepared-for abandonment of the New Economic Policy.

V. The problems of accumulation and the evolution of peasant consumption during the NEP period

The preceding analyses have shown that what is meant by the expression "complete abandonment of the NEP" is, in fact, *abandonment of what was left* of the NEP in 1929. Actually, before 1929, the "NEP as it really was" consisted of a combination of contradictory measures, some of which were in conformity with Lenin's conception of the NEP while others were not -- it was a sort of combination of the "NEP" and the "non-NEP." In practice, from 1925 on, the "non-NEP" aspect assumed increasing importance, and it became predominant toward the end of 1929.

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From 1922 to 1927, however, respect was shown to some fundamental principles of the NEP, in particular the absence of measures of constraint imposed on the peasant masses, the levying of a fixed agricultural tax payable in cash, and the effort to be made to "close the scissors."

(a) The problems of accumulation and the increasing abandonment of the principles of the NEP

Starting in 1925, the magnitude of the problems arising from the need for accumulation on a scale sufficient to ensure the reequipment of the economy, *and the terms in which these problems were conceived*, resulted in the adoption of a series of measures which contradicted the NEP and jeopardized the improvement in the standard of living of the peasant masses. Such improvement was one of the aims of the NEP as a road to socialism, being intended to help reduce the disparity between the living conditions of the workers and the peasants.

Certain measures adopted during 1925 involved the risk of transforming the "NEP as it really was" into a sort of road to private capitalism. These measures resulted from a resolution adopted by the CC which met between April 23 and 30, 1925.^[38] They were concerned mainly with extending the right to lease land and extending wage relations in agriculture.

On the first point, the resolution authorized wider use by the peasants of the right to lease land. Contracts of lease could, in certain cases, be made for a period of twelve years.^[39] The resolution thus confirmed a decision taken on April 21, 1925, by the presidium of the VTsIK, modifying by "making more flexible" the provisions of Article 28 of the Agrarian Code of 1922. Thereafter, cases of authorized leasing of land grew so numerous that it was possible for this practice to become relatively normal, whereas the 1922 Code had allowed it in only exceptional cases.^[40]

On the second point, the resolution of the CC ratified a decree adopted by the Sovnarkom on April 18, 1925, lifting

nearly all restrictions on the employment of wage labor by peasants.^[41]

These provisions were to remain in force in the following years, but from 1928 on they tended to become increasingly pointless: to lease land or hire wage workers meant defining oneself as a kulak and so attracting special danger from the "emergency measures."

Nevertheless, between 1925 and 1928 these measures contributed to a certain reinforcement of the positions of the rich and well-to-do peasants, as well as to an increase in the accumulation they accomplished -- this was, moreover, one of the purposes aimed at, and it was very explicitly shown by some statements that were made on the eve of the adoption of the resolution mentioned above. The clearest passage to this effect is found in Bukharin's speech of April 17, 1925, when he said:

The well-to-do upper stratum of the peasantry -- the kulaks and, to some extent, the middle peasants too -- *are at present afraid to accumulate*. . . . If the peasant installs an iron roof, the next day he will be denounced as a kulak, and that will mean the end of him. If he buys a machine, he does it "in such a way that the Communists won't notice." Improvement in agricultural technique has come to be surrounded by an atmosphere of conspiracy.

If we look at the various strata of the peasantry, we see that the kulak is discontented with us because *we are preventing him from accumulating*. At the same time, the poor peasants sometimes grumble against us because we do not let them take employment as agricultural workers in the service of that same kulak.

Our policy towards the rural areas should develop towards a reduction and partial abolition of the many restrictions which hold back the growth of the farms belonging to the well-to-do peasant and the kulak. We ought to say to the peasants, to all the peasants: *get rich*, develop your farms. . . . Paradoxical as it may seem, we must develop the farm of the well-to-do peasant so as to help the poor peasant and the middle peasant.^[42]

In this speech Bukharin was obviously preparing the Party to accept the measures that were to be adopted a few days

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later. What he said shows how at that time the problem of accumulation was linked with a line that relatively favored the well-to-do strata of the peasantry. According to this line, some of the savings accumulated by the well-to-do peasants were also to be drained off by the state through loans, and made to serve accumulation in state-owned industry.

The measures thus taken did strengthen the kulaks to some extent, but their "contribution" to increased accumulation, especially in the state sector, remained negligible, and this caused the turn in policy in 1926 toward promoting growth in state-sector accumulation *through credit expansion, currency inflation, and an evolution of prices which especially affected, as we have seen, the poor and middle peasants*.

Various figures show that the way in which the NEP was implemented had the result that it failed in one of its purposes, which was to *reduce the gap* between town and country, particularly as regards consumption of industrial goods.

(b) The growing gap between rural and urban consumption of industrial goods

Between 1923 and 1927 the rural population's share of the consumption of industrial goods *fell steadily*.^[43] In the middle of the NEP period (in 1925-1926 [and the situation got worse in 1928]), consumption per head of population in the rural areas, where almost all industrial goods

were concerned, was lower than prewar, amounting to barely one-quarter of consumption per head in the towns.^[44]

The level of consumption of the less well-off strata of the peasantry was, of course, a good deal lower than what is revealed by average figures.

This state of affairs expressed the weaknesses of "NEP as it really was." It was due partly to failure to close the scissors, partly to the smallness of the net marketed share of agricultural production (the share which enabled the peasants to buy industrial goods), and also to the shortage of goods in the rural areas. This last point calls for clarification, especially because, according to the interpretation of the crisis of the NEP given

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by Preobrazhensky and the Trotskyists, the crisis was due to "excessive demand" from agriculture -- that is, to a situation which dictated priority development for industry, the "financing" of which must be accepted as a burden by the peasantry. Let us see how the overall peasant demand for industrial goods evolved.

(c) The agricultural "surplus" and the demand for industrial goods.^[45]

According to S. Grosskopf's estimates, the net balance of peasant sales, after deduction of taxes and other charges, fell from 1,347 million prewar roubles in 1912-1913, to 980 million prewar roubles in 1925-1926.^[46] Taking 1912-1913 as 100, the index for this balance stood at 72.7 in 1925-1926. Leaving aside the cash income which the peasants could get from nonagricultural activities (income which we know has diminished), and savings in cash (which do not markedly affect the amounts being considered), *the balance in question represents the peasants' demand for industrial goods*. Between 1912-1913 and 1925-1926 this demand thus declined by 27.3 percent. Moreover, what this shows is the *monetary expression* of demand, not its *volume*, which was affected by the increase in the retail prices of industrial goods.

In 1925-1926 these prices were 2.2 times what they had been before the war.^[47] The peasants' demand for industrial goods in terms of volume was proportionately less, so that we must substitute 33 for 72.7.

The subsequent years saw a certain improvement. If we accept that the net balance of agriculture, after deduction of taxes and other charges, grew in proportion to the net sales of agricultural produce, we get the following picture^[48]:

<i>Index of peasant demand for industrial goods</i>			
(1912-1913 = 100)			
1926-1927	75.2	1927-1928	80.2

The volume of peasant demand for industrial goods obviously increased a little more rapidly during those last two

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years because industrial prices fell. Indeed, in 1928, as we know, the peasants' demand for industrial goods could not be satisfied.^[49]

These few facts suffice to show the formal and abstract character^[50] of the interpretations of

the crisis of the NEP put forward by Preobrazhensky and the Trotskyists, who attributed the "shortage of industrial goods" to the increase in peasant incomes and the "lag of industry behind agriculture."

Actually, peasant demand does not account in the least for the shortage of industrial goods. The respective dynamics of industrial production and of the monetary demand from the rural areas for industrial goods reveal this clearly. Taking 1913 as 100, the index of industrial production reached the following levels^[51]:

1925-1926	89.9
1926-1927	103.9
1927-1928	119.6

In 1925-1926 the index of industrial production thus surpassed that of peasant demand for industrial goods by 12.2 points. The gap grew larger in the following years, to 28.7 in 1926-1927 and 39.4 in 1927-1928.

If there was a shortage of industrial goods, the reason for it must be sought above all in the conditions of reproduction characteristic of the urban sector, and not in the countryside. The role thus played by the urban sector had consequences that were all the more negative because the links between the Bolshevik Party and the peasant masses were weak, and the ideological and political relations in which the peasantry itself was caught were not, on the whole, favorable to the strengthening of the worker-peasant alliance.

Notes

1. Lenin, *CW*, vol. 33, pp. 407-408. ([Interview with Arthur Ransome](#), correspondent of the *Manchester Guardian*, November 1922 [my emphasis -- C. B.]. One pood = 16.4 kilograms.) [p. [137](#)]

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2. Hence the expressions so often used by Lenin when describing the Soviet peasant: "hard-working" and "zealous." [p. [138](#)]
3. Grosskopf, *L'Alliance ouvrière*, p. 169. [p. [138](#)]
4. See above, pp. 94 ff. [p. [138](#)]
5. The total marketed share means the ratio between total amount sold and gross production. This share must be distinguished from that of net *amount marketed*, which is obtained by deducting the amount of purchases of agricultural produce made by the peasantry from the total amount sold, and relating this figure to that for gross production. The net share marketed does not represent the evolution of the connection between the peasant farms and the market but the *demand for nonagricultural goods* emanating from these farms. The estimate given here is taken from L. N. Litoshenko's article, "Krestyanskoye khozyaistvo i rynek," in *Ekonomicheskoye Obozreniye*, no. 5 (1925); quoted in Grosskopf, *L'Alliance ouvrière*, p. 167. [p. [140](#)]
6. Grosskopf, *L'Alliance ouvrière*, p. 168. [p. [141](#)]
7. For some figures, see above, p. 157. [p. [141](#)]
8. Calculated from *Kontrolnye tsifry*, p. 73. [p. [141](#)]
9. On these points see Grosskopf, *L'Alliance ouvrière*, pp. 67 ff., 347 ff., above, p. 157 ff. [p. [141](#)]
10. Down to 1927-1928 the quantity of produce exchanged between peasants was of about the same order of magnitude as that of off-village sales (Carr

- and Davies, *Foundations*, vol. I, pt. 2, p. 916). [p. 142]
11. These percentages are fractions of the total turnover, so that their magnitude is affected by the prices at which the produce was bought, and these prices were higher for buyers on the peasant markets than for the state's purchasing organs. In 1926, for example, a pood (16.4 kilograms) of rye was sold for between 1.03 and 1.44 rouble on the peasant markets, but was bought for 0.94 rouble by the state (see B. Kerblay, *Les Marchés paysans*, pp. 112, 114). In March 1928, in the Ukraine the price of rye on the peasants' market was 126.3 percent of that paid by the procurement organs; in March 1929 it rose to 369.2 percent of that price. (See *Ekonomicheskaya Zhizn*, April 26, and May 1, 1929, and *Torgovo-Promyshlennaya Gazeta*, April 6, 1929, quoted in A. Baykov, *The Soviet Economic System*, p. 70.) [p. 142]
 12. The others (about 860,000) were either urban craftsmen or (fewer than 80,000) workers employed in small-scale capitalist industry (Carr and Davies, *Foundations*, vol. I. pt. 1, pp. 390-391). [p. 144]
 13. Yu. Larin, *Chastnyi Kapital v SSSR*, pp. 119-120. [p. 144]

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14. *Torgovo-Promyshlennaya Gazeta*, July 5, 1929. [p. 145]
15. See below, p. 205 ff. [p. 145]
16. See below, p. 203 ff. [p. 146]
17. The protracted incapacity of state and cooperative trade to replace private trade in the villages was due particularly to the circumstance that the peddlars and shopkeepers were content with installations that were simpler than those required by the managers and officials of the state and cooperative organs. The latter very often insisted on having a proper shop and a van, where their rivals had made do with a mere shed and horses for transport. [p. 146]
18. Baykov, *The Soviet Economic System*, p. 242. [p. 146]
19. *Ibid.*, p. 67. [p. 146]
20. *Ekonomicheskaya Zhizn*, November 14, 1928, quoted in Baykov, *The Soviet Economic System*, p. 70. Peasants who could produce the receipts mentioned were supposed to be given priority in supplies. [p. 147]
21. The term "scissors" was used with reference to the picture presented by the graphs showing the movement of industrial and agricultural prices. It was said that "the scissors are opening," when these prices diverged, whereas when they came closer together, "the scissors are closing." The scissors were regarded as having "closed" when the *relative* level of prices in 1918 was reached. [p. 147]
22. In 1927-1928 planned state purchases corresponded to the following fractions of *marketed production*: 100 percent of cotton and sugarbeet; 98 percent of flax and tobacco; 92 percent of furs; 80 percent of skins; and 70 percent of wool (Baykov, *The Soviet Economic System*, p. 62). In the case of some important agricultural products, such as hemp and flax, marketed production was less than prewar. (*Ekonomicheskoye Zhizn*, May 3, 1927; see also Richard Lorenz's thesis, *Das Ende der Neuer Ökonomischer Politik*, p. 28, and Grosskopf, *L'Alliance ouvrière*, Table 209, p. 352.) [p. 148]
23. Baykov, *The Soviet Economic System*, p. 63. [p. 148]
24. In 1926-1927 the tendency to fix low procurement prices for grain was especially marked. In that year the index of procurement prices (100 being the 1911-1914 price level) stood at 118.7 for grain, whereas it was 133.9 for state-procured products as a whole, *and the average index of prices for all agricultural produce, including purchases by individuals and private traders, stood at 149.3* (Kerblay, *Les Marchés paysans*, p. 119). Other

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- examples of substantial differences between procurement prices and "market" prices have been mentioned above, for the years 1926, 1928, and 1929 (see [note 11](#) above, p. 159). [p. [149](#)]
25. See above, p. 148. [p. [149](#)]
 26. In 1926-1927 procurement prices were reduced by 20 percent for grain, and then stood at 25 percent less for wheat and 50 percent less for rye than the peasants could get on the private market (Kerblay, *Les Marchés paysans*, p. 118). [p. [149](#)]
 27. Grosskopf, *L'Alliance ouvrière*, p. 335. [p. [150](#)]
 28. Especially because the procurement organs did not as a rule succeed in providing the peasants with the amounts of fertilizer, selected seed, etc., which they had undertaken to provide when the "contracts" were signed. This aggravated the *one-sided* character of the obligations to which the peasants had to conform. [p. [150](#)]
 29. See [note 21](#) above, p. 160. [p. [151](#)]
 30. There was talk at that time of a "scissors crisis." [p. [151](#)]
 31. These figures have been calculated from the last column in Table 11 on p. 119 of Kerblay, *Les Marchés paysans*. The index shows the evolution of the ratio between agricultural prices as obtained by the producer and *retail* prices of manufactured goods (a weighted index of the public and private sectors). The way that the weighting has been performed obviously affects the way the indices evolve, and the fact that the public sector's share was smaller in the villages than in the towns has not been taken into account in the table given here (so that the peasants' situation was even worse than is shown. For a calculation which takes this factor into account, see Grosskopf, *L'Alliance ouvrière*, pp. 195-196. [p. [151](#)]
 32. Calculated from the same source as the table on p. 151. [p. [152](#)]
 33. For 1913 the prices recorded were, of course, market prices. [p. [152](#)]
 34. Rye only. [p. [152](#)]
 35. A. N. Malafeyev, *Istoriya tsenoobrazovaniya SSSR, 1917-1963*, pp. 384-385. Coefficients calculated from indices with 1913=100. [p. [152](#)]
 36. Baykov, *The Soviet Economic System*, p. 67, quoting *Inland Trade of the U.S.S.R. During Ten Years*, p. 82. The 1913 figures show, of course, market prices. [p. [152](#)]
 37. See above, p. 147. [p. [153](#)]
 38. *K.P.S.S. v rezolyutsiykh*, vol. I, pp. 922-932. [p. [154](#)]
 39. *Ibid.*, p. 927. [p. [154](#)]
 40. On the Agrarian Code of 1922, see volume I of the present work pp. 235-237. On the reform of 1925, see *Sobranie Uzakonenii* (1925), no. 27, art. 191; and Carr, *Socialism*, vol. I, pp. 257-258. [p. [154](#)]
 41. *K.P.S.S. v rezolyutsiyakh*, vol. I, p. 927, and Carr, *Socialism*, vol. I, p. 268. [p. [155](#)]
 42. *Pravda*, April 24, 1925. A revised version of this speech of Bukharin's was published in *Bolshevik*, April 30 and June 1 (nos. 8 and 9/10 of 1925). In this version the word "kulak" was in most instances replaced by "well-to-do peasant." There is a French translation in N. Bukharin et al., *La Question paysanne en URSS*, pp. 139 ff. [p. [155](#)]
 43. Between 1923-1924 and 1926-1927 it fell from 59.4 percent to 53.2 percent (Grosskopf, *L'Alliance ouvrière*, p. 206). [p. [156](#)]
 44. On the other hand, thanks to the division of the land, the peasant population's consumption per head of *food products* was somewhat greater in 1925-1926 than it had been before the war, and had definitely improved so far as the less well-off sections were concerned. Nevertheless, consumption per head of wheaten flour, sugar, meat, bacon, fat, and eggs *was still less in peasant families than in the families of manual and office workers* (Grosskopf, *L'Alliance ouvrière*, Table 92, p. 170, and Table 96, p. 174). [p. [156](#)]
 45. See also some other observations on this question, above, pp. 141 ff. [p. [157](#)]

46. Grosskopf, *L'Alliance ouvrière*, p. 197. [p. 157]
47. Calculated from Kerblay, *Les Marchés paysans*, p. 119. [p. 157]
48. These figures take the percentage increase in net agricultural sales as being as shown in the series of control figures for the years under consideration (*Kontrolnye tsifry 1929-1930 gg.*, p. 540), that is, assuming as constant the rate of taxation and other charges: this introduces a slight inaccuracy which seems hard to rectify. [p. 157]
49. See above, pp. 146, 152. [p. 158]
50. In March 1922, the CC of the Russian Communist Party had examined Preobrazhensky's theses on work in the rural areas and rejected them after discussing the criticism made by Lenin, who blamed Preobrazhensky for his abstract formalism (see Lenin, *CW*, vol. 33, pp. 237 ff. [*Transcriber's Note*: See Lenin's "[To Comrade Molotov for the Members of the Political Bureau Re Comrade Preobrazhensky's Theses](#)". -- DJR]). The same formalism is found in Preobrazhensky's later writings: see some significant quotations in Grosskopf, *L'Alliance ouvrière*, pp. 188 ff. [p. 158]
51. This series was compiled by Gosplan for production by industry as a whole (E. Zaleski, *Planning*, pp. 380-381). [p. 158]

3. The reproduction and transformation of ideological and political relations in the rural areas

The problems discussed in this chapter are especially large and complex. Furthermore, the information available concerning them is, as a rule, inadequate and unreliable. We shall therefore not deal with these problems in a thorough way here, but merely point out the outlines and main aspects, as these become apparent in the light of the information we possess. It is plain that only far-reaching additional research (which assumes, among other things, access to the Soviet archives, which is not at present possible) will make it conceivable to subject to really systematic treatment questions which we can only touch upon here.

From the standpoint of ideology and politics, the situation of the Soviet countryside during the NEP was characterized by the poor integration of the peasantry into the Soviet system and the feeble penetration of socialist ideas among them. These circumstances were connected with the low level of activity by the Party and the soviets in the villages and the reproduction, in hardly altered form, of the old ideological relations embodied in the *mir*, the family, and the church.

I. The Party's implantation among the peasants

We know that at the end of the civil war relations between the Bolsheviks and the organs of

Soviet power on the one hand, and the peasantry, on the other, were extremely strained.^[1] One of the immediate aims of the NEP was, pre-

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cisely, to reduce this tension, and thereby to strengthen the worker-peasant alliance. There can be no doubt that between 1921 and 1927 the NEP was a success as regards strengthening the peasants' confidence in the Soviet government. This applies especially to their confidence in the government's capacity to get the economy back on its feet. Between 1923 and 1927 considerable progress was achieved in this respect -- progress that was to a large extent compromised in 1928-1929 by "blind" application of the "emergency measures."

However, there was a big difference between the peasants' having confidence that the new government was capable of managing the economy and their being ready to give active support to this government -- or, going even further, to join the Bolshevik Party. Yet, unless a sufficient number of genuine peasants joined the Party, it could neither exert effective ideological influence in the rural areas nor, without real inside knowledge of their problems, effectively take the peasants' interests in hand, and thereby become capable of developing its own conception of the peasantry's place in the economy and politics of the Soviet power.

As regards the number of peasants joining the Bolshevik Party, and the Party's work in the countryside, the situation left a great deal to be desired. During the NEP period, the Party's implantation in the rural areas remained slight. In his report to the Fourteenth Party Congress, Stalin mentioned that the number of Party members belonging to village cells related to the total adult rural population showed that the percentage of Communists in the rural areas had increased from 0.26 at the time of the Thirteenth Congress to 0.37 at the time of the Fourteenth.^[2] Such low proportions make a contrast with the importance of the tasks which the Bolshevik Party had to carry out in the countryside, in a mainly rural country. This organizational situation was, in part, a heritage from the past, but it also reflected the weaknesses in the Party line on peasant questions.

Commenting on the figures quoted, Stalin said:

Our Party's growth in the countryside is terribly slow. I do not mean to say that it ought to grow by leaps and bounds, but the

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percentage of the peasantry that we have in the Party is, after all, very insignificant. Our Party is a workers' party. Workers will always preponderate in it. . . . But it is also clear that without an alliance with the peasantry the dictatorship of the proletariat is impossible, that the Party must have a certain percentage of the best people among the peasantry in its ranks. . . . From this aspect, matters are still far from well.^[3]

Nor do the figures quoted fully expose the Party's weakness among the peasantry, because not all members of a rural cell were peasants. According to the CC's statistics of January 1927, less than half of the members of rural cells were actual peasants -- the others were officials of Soviet institutions, employees of the cooperative societies, teachers, and so on.^[4] Among these members some might be of rural origin, *but they were no longer peasants*. We need to reduce the numbers quoted by about one-half if we are to form an estimate of the Party's implantation among the peasantry in the middle years of the NEP period.

It should be added that in 1927 genuine peasants made up only 10 percent of the Party's total membership -- in a country where the peasantry made up more than 80 percent of the population.^[5]

Throughout the NEP years the Party's implantation in the rural areas remained extremely slight: in 1928 there were only 186,000 Party members in rural cells, and in 1929, 242,000.^[6] However, the scope of the crisis that the country and the Party were then experiencing was such that, in order to tackle the tasks before them, the Sixteenth Party Conference (April 23-29, 1929) considered it necessary to "purge" the membership, especially in the rural cells. This conference declared that only a purge could transform these cells "into points of support for the Communist Party in the countryside, strengthen confidence in the Party, bring into the Party's ranks the best Communist elements . . . and promote the collectivisation of agriculture."^[7]

Actually, the purge was already under way, and the rural cells had not been reconstructed, when the Soviet Union entered the period of mass collectivization. On the whole, *collec-*

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tivization was carried out without the local organs of the Party being in a position to control the way it developed.

At the end of the NEP period the social composition of the Party's rural cells was far from satisfactory: the proportion of rich and well-to-do peasants was actually higher than their proportion in the rural population as a whole.^[8] An inquiry carried out in 1929 among the rural Communists showed that in the RSFSR one-quarter of these Party members possessed assets exceeding 800 roubles, whereas among the peasantry as a whole such assets were held by only one peasant in six. Of the peasants who joined the Party, many became officials. Apart from them, it was mainly middle peasants -- perhaps employers of wage labor -- who had the time needed to participate fully in the Party's activity.^[9]

The qualitative weakness of the rural cells was partly the reason for the exceptional sweep of the purge carried out among the Communists of the countryside. Between 1929 and 1930, 16 percent from rural cells were expelled as against 8 percent from factory cells.^[10] However, the magnitude of this purge was due not only to the circumstance mentioned, but also to the distrust felt by certain Party cadres toward peasants in general. Indeed, one is struck by the fact that the purge was much less severe (10 percent) in the "nonproductive" cells, although a Party resolution had described these as the ones where the most serious abuses occurred (misuse of Party members' authority for self-seeking purposes, embezzlement of funds, nepotism, careerism, bureaucratic attitude to the masses),^[11] the ones in which "everyday forms of decay" were to be observed and in which elements alien to the proletariat, bureaucratized elements, and persons who, having come from other Parties, retained their old ideological conceptions were concentrated.

So massive a purge of the rural cells was due also to the incompetence and routinism of many of the Party members then working in the countryside. Numerous reports show that even politically reliable elements, devoted to the Bolshevik Party, were not up to the tasks that devolved upon them. They issued more orders than explanations, and, owing to their lack

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of roots in peasant life, the explanations they gave remained abstract, remote from reality, often even failing to deal with concrete problems. Frequently they were unable to convince people or made decrees which were inappropriate and caused discontent.^[12] However, the major causes of expulsion from the Party were corruption and nepotism, or a way of life and conduct that were incompatible with membership in the Party.^[13]

Altogether, the conditions under which the Party operated in the countryside failed to correspond, both quantitatively and qualitatively, with the demands of the situation. From the quantitative angle, toward the end of the NEP the members of rural cells who were really

peasants amounted to only about 0.1 percent of the peasantry. Therefore, the Party could fulfill only with difficulty its role as the instrument of the dictatorship of the proletariat in the countryside, as the apparatus for introducing proletarian ideas among the peasantry, the link between the Soviet power and the peasant masses. This weakness of the Party affected the conditions under which the rural soviets operated: they worked badly, and, in turn, their bad work reflected negatively on the Party itself.

II. *The rural soviets*

At the outset of the NEP period, when the peasant revolts of 1921 were still recent and movements of discontent among the peasantry not uncommon, the rural soviets were hardly linked with the masses at all. Their composition was frequently determined by Party decisions that were confirmed by elections in which only a minority of peasants took part. The rural soviets were not genuine mass organizations.

In 1924 the Bolshevik Party leadership applied itself specially to the problem of the rural soviets. On October 26 Stalin spoke to the CC on "the Party's tasks in the countryside."^[14] He drew attention to *the peasants' mistrust of the towns*, the discontent that still prevailed in many rural areas, the fact that

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there was still risk of peasant revolts, and the need *to develop the rural soviets*. He linked this need with the flourishing of non-Party organizations -- peasant committees, cooperatives, Young Communist organizations -- which was a feature of the period.^[15] In his eyes, the flourishing of these organizations involved a danger that they might escape from the Party's guidance, whereas development of the rural soviets would enable the working class to fulfill completely its role of leadership in relation to the peasantry.^[16]

A few days earlier, on October 22, Stalin had already discussed these questions before a conference of secretaries of rural Party units.^[17] He emphasized particularly the need for revitalizing the soviets. Referring to the revolts which had occurred in several rural localities in Georgia, he said:

What happened in Georgia may be repeated all over Russia if we do not radically change our very approach to the peasantry, if we do not create an atmosphere of complete confidence between the Party and the non-Party people, if we do not heed the voice of the non-Party people, and, lastly, if we do not revitalise the Soviets in order to provide an outlet for the political activity of the toiling masses of the peasantry.^[18]

The revitalizing of the soviets was seen as a means of forming *nuclei of activists*, among whom *the Party would be able to recruit*, while *the peasants would learn how to manage their own affairs*.

In order to carry this task through, according to Stalin, a radical change would have to be made in the way in which the Party dealt with peasant problems. "There must be no domineering [by the Party] and an atmosphere of mutual confidence must be created between Party and non-Party people." The rural soviets must be given a "material basis" for their revitalization through "the institution of local budgets," with authority to collect taxes.^[19]

Although ratified by the CC,^[20] and considered now a Party practice, the orientations expressed in these speeches were in reality pursued very unevenly. They were to be reiterated again and again until the end of the NEP period. Thus, after

the Fourteenth Party Conference, Stalin repeated in May 1925 what he had said in 1924; but he put some points more sharply. When presenting a summary of these tasks that the Fourteenth Party Conference had decided upon to an assembly of activists of the Moscow Party organization, he described the position like this: "The second task consists in gradually but steadily pursuing the line of eliminating the old methods of administration and leadership in the countryside, the line of revitalising the soviets, the line of transforming the soviets into genuinely elected bodies, the line of implanting the principles of soviet democracy in the countryside."^[21]

The Party's rural cadres put up considerable resistance to the line of extending soviet democracy. This is proved by some phrases in Stalin's report, where he criticizes the style of work of these cadres and at the same time shows how the peasants were awakening to political life. He begins by denouncing the behavior of a certain district secretary, whose attitude he depicts like this: "What do we want newspapers for? It's quieter and better without them. If the peasants begin reading newspapers they will start asking all sorts of questions and we shall have no end of trouble with them."

Then he adds: "And this secretary calls himself a Communist! It scarcely needs proof that he is not a Communist but a calamity."^[22]

That these declarations and resolutions had any extensive effect is far from evident, since it was considered necessary to go on restating them right down to the end of the NEP period. Nevertheless, changes did take place. For example, more peasants took part in elections. The proportional voting, which was only 30 percent in 1923, reached 45 percent in 1925, and rose to more than one-half of the peasant electorate during the second half of the 1920s.^[23]

We must not, however, overestimate the significance of such figures. The increased proportion of peasants taking part in elections resulted to some extent from a certain pressure that was brought to bear on them. It was not always followed by corresponding increase in the activity of the rural soviets, or in the interest taken in this activity by the peasant masses.

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One of the obstacles in the way of the development of genuine soviet power in the countryside was the influence exerted by the kulaks over a section of the peasant masses during the NEP period. Another was the inadequacy of the financial resources at the disposal of the village soviets, which prevented them from undertaking any really useful activity. Meanwhile the traditional forms of peasant organization continued to exist, and were usually endowed with material and financial means^[24] that the soviets lacked; so, they often seemed more "effective" than the latter, and they were frequently dominated by the rich peasants.

Finally, the attitude taken up by the local Party cadres and soviet officials, their "authoritarianism," contributed to holding back the activity of the village and district soviets.

This "authoritarianism" did not result from the "psychology" of the officials in question but from their class attitude. Having to a large extent centralized in their own hands the reality of power in the locality, the officials of the soviet apparatus (who were often former officials of the Tsarist administration), occupied a politically dominant position, and, unless they were true revolutionaries, would not spontaneously let go of it, subject themselves to control by the masses, or permit the latter to run their own affairs. Only class struggle by the peasant masses could alter such behavior, but it was hard for such a struggle to develop, owing to the insufficient presence of the Party among the peasantry, and so the latter tended to look after their affairs through their traditional organizations, like the *skhod*.

In his speeches of June 1925 at the Sverdlov University, Stalin noted that the situation in the rural soviets was highly unsatisfactory. He said that

until now, the situation was that quite a number of rural districts were governed by small groups of people, connected more with the *uyezd* and *gubernia* administrations than with the rural population. The result of this was that those who governed the rural districts mostly looked to the top, the *uyezd*, and least of all looked to the bottom, to the rural population: they felt responsible not to the villages, not to their electors, but to the *uyezd* and *gubernia* administration. . . . The result of this was unchecked

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arbitrariness and tyranny of the rulers, on the one hand, and discontent and murmuring in the countryside, on the other. We are now putting an end to this state of affairs. . . .^[25]

Stalin observed that frequently the elections to the rural soviets were not genuine elections, but a bureaucratic procedure which made possible "smuggling in 'deputies' by means of all kinds of trickery and of pressure exercised by the small groups of rulers who were afraid of losing power."^[26]

As a result of the situation thus described, fresh elections were organized in 1925 and 1926. So as to combat the electoral practices previously operative, the right to vote was extended to some categories of the rural population which had hitherto been deprived of it.^[27]

Actually, given the ideological and political balance of forces that obtained in the countryside at that time, together with the weakness of the Party's rural cells, rich peasants often succeeded in getting into the rural soviets, which obviously did not render the latter more capable of responding to the real needs of the peasant masses. Penetration of the rural soviets by the kulaks was exposed in articles published in the Soviet press. One of these articles noted that

since the Soviets have begun to take a share in village life, the kulaks have increased their efforts to subordinate them and bring them within the sphere of their influence. Though Party organisations have shown more strength in these elections [1926?] than in previous years, yet in some cases the directives not to apply pressure or administrative measures [on the electorate] were interpreted as an order to stop Party interference in the election campaign.^[28]

The consequence had been penetration of the soviets by rich peasants, or their "representatives."

This situation was due at that time to the ideological influence wielded over a section of the middle peasantry by the well-to-do peasants. At the beginning of 1925 Stalin noted the existence of such influence in a number of rural districts^[29] -- at a time when he was warning against the temptation to stir up class struggle against the kulaks.^[30]

The infiltration of the kulaks into the rural soviets was also

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due to the economic pressure that the rich peasants could bring to bear on the poor and middle strata of the peasantry. This pressure was made possible by the position that the kulaks held in the economic life of the village, by the fact that they leased land, hired out means of production (ploughs, horses, etc.), and were creditors of some of the poor and middle peasants. These bonds of dependence on the rich peasants were reflected in both the composition of the rural soviets and their activity.

The slogan of revitalizing the soviets enjoined the Party's rural cells to do everything possible

to help the peasant masses emancipate themselves from the influence of the well-to-do strata of the peasantry and take their affairs in hand for themselves. The fact that this slogan remained on the agenda all through the NEP period shows that the task assigned was still unaccomplished. Thus, in November 1926 Kalinin said to the Executive Committee of the Soviets of the RSFSR: "Our chief task is to draw the broad masses into Soviet construction, i.e., to revitalise the Soviets."^[31]

Actually, at the beginning of 1929 the activity of the village soviets was still very inadequate. The village soviet was seen by the peasants as "an artificial creation enjoying none of the prestige or efficacy of the traditional indigenous peasant unit, the *mir*." ^[32] At that time there were upwards of 72,000 rural soviets, each of which covered several (an average of eight) villages or "inhabited localities." Each rural soviet had an average of eighteen members, but their meetings were very irregular and, usually, only between five and seven of the deputies attended. It even happened quite often that there would be only one or two plenary meetings a year, while the soviet's work was carried on by the chairman and secretary elected by the soviet. These men were paid very little -- mere pittance to supplement other sources of livelihood -- and often gave up their jobs to take better paid ones. It was not uncommon for the chairman of a rural soviet to be barely literate and scarcely capable of reading the documents sent out by the central government or by the district or regional soviets.^[33]

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To sum up, during the second phase of the NEP period, apart from the role played by the rich peasants, there were a number of obstacles in the way of a real revitalizing of the rural soviets: the Party's weakness in the countryside, the distrustful attitude of many cadres toward the peasantry, and the existence of a contradictory peasant ideology, which could have been changed only by a policy pursued actively by the Party -- a policy aimed at strengthening the influence of revolutionary ideas and speeding up the advance along the socialist road, uniting the initiatives of the poor and middle peasants, and transforming the way in which the "land communities" and the *skhod* functioned.

III. The contradictions in "peasant ideology" and the role played by ideological centers outside Bolshevik Party control in the rural areas

Owing to the existence of distinct and conflicting classes among the peasantry, "peasant ideology" was deeply divided. A number of notions that were mutually contradictory together made up the form of ideology to which the peasants were more or less subject and in the name of which they waged their struggles, becoming either receptive or obstructive to the activity of the Bolshevik Party.

(a) Religious ideas

Religious ideas, as reproduced by the Orthodox Church, by the religious sects, and by the peasant family, constituted a tremendous force for social conservatism which the Bolshevik Party was often at a loss to combat. Very often Party members tried to launch frontal attacks on this force for social conservatism, instead of getting around it and preparing the development of its contradictions. Such frontal attacks usually ended in defeat. In his speech of October 1924 on the Party's

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immediate tasks in the countryside, Stalin spoke of the problem in these terms:

Occasionally some comrades are inclined to regard the peasants as materialist philosophers and to think that it is enough to deliver a lecture on natural science to convince the peasant of the non-existence of God. Often they fail to realise that the peasant looks on God in a practical way, i.e., he is not averse to turning away from God sometimes, but he is often torn by doubt: 'Who knows, maybe there is a God after all. Would it not be better to please both the Communists and God, as being safer for my affairs?' He who fails to take this peculiar mentality of the peasant into account totally fails to understand what the relations between Party and non-Party people should be, fails to understand that in matters concerning anti-religious propaganda a careful approach is needed even to the peasant's prejudices.^[34]

At the beginning of the NEP period frontal attacks on religion were, as a rule, abstained from, and the obstacles that religious ideas were capable of presenting to the Party's activity were avoided. This was not so when the period was reaching its close. The frontal attacks that were launched at that time ended more often than not in a negative result, with many peasants grouping around the rich peasants and the defenders of religion.

(b) *The skhod and the mir*

The idea of the peasantry being capable of existing independently of the towns and the state was also an element in peasant ideology. This idea was materialized in the *mir* (transformed into the "land community") and the *skhod*, or general assembly of the peasants in each village.

These were ideological centers possessing very great political importance. Their existence contributed to weakening the village soviets, and gave support to a set of practices of resistance to the worker-peasant alliance which brought grist to the kulaks' mill.

It will be recalled that the Soviet Agrarian Code of 1922 recognized the legal existence of the "land community" and

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"land association." This was, in practice, a continuation of the former village community or *mir*. It was managed, in principle, 'by the general assembly of the peasants, or *skhod*. Article 54 of the Code granted legal personality to these land communities. Each of them owned communally what had belonged by tradition to the *mir*, which meant that it possessed material and financial resources that the rural soviet lacked. These resources were derived mainly from the dues paid for use of the common lands, woods, and ponds.^[35] The land community could also tax its members, and it was regarded as the owner of the smithies, sawmills, etc., belonging to the village.

The *skhod*'s authority was accepted by the majority of the peasants, so that the *mir* (or the equivalent institution in the Ukraine and elsewhere) enjoyed much greater power than the village soviet. The *skhod* was often dominated by the kulaks, as was made clear in reports given to the Communist Academy in 1926. Frequently the poor peasants did not even see any point in attending the meetings of the *skhod*: when they did they were hardly listened to and even sometimes were ejected. At the Thirteenth All-Russia Congress of Soviets, in 1927, delegates complained that at that time only between 10 and 15 percent of the peasants who had the right to take part in the *skhod* actually did so, and this minority consisted mainly of the better-off elements in the villages.^[36]

In December 1927 the Fifteenth Party Congress tackled the problems presented by the existence of the *skhod* and the other traditional peasant organizations playing a similar role. One of the rapporteurs noted that the total annual revenue of these organizations came to

between 80 and 100 million roubles, whereas the village soviets had at their disposal only 16 million roubles.^[37] In a document prepared in 1927 for the *Orgburo*, the Communist Academy's Institute for Building, the Soviets arrived at the following conclusion: "The economically independent land community takes the village soviet under its guardianship. The material dependence of the village soviet on the land community puts a brake on the further development and revitalisation of the work of the Soviet and of its sections, and on the other hand is the basis for

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the taking over of the work of the village soviet by the land community *skhod*. "^[38]

At the Fifteenth Party Congress delegates spoke of the presence of "dual power" in the countryside: the power of the rural soviet, and that of the *skhod* (which was an assembly, be it recalled, in which the poor and less well-off peasants carried little weight).^[39] A resolution passed by this congress called for "an improvement in relations between the soviets and the land communities, aimed at ensuring that the former play the leading role."^[40] In practice, however, this resolution remained ineffective. Thus, a year and a half later, the Fourteenth All-Russia Congress of Soviets, meeting in May 1929, heard an official report which stated that "the village soviet remains . . . dependent on the land communities, receiving very large grants from them."^[41]

The fight to strengthen the village soviets, despite the successes it obtained when the village soviet was provided with certain financial resources^[42] and obtained material results, remained in general an unequal struggle in which the *skhod* even managed sometimes to add to its power, turning itself into an "electoral commission" which went so far as to draw up the list of electors to the village soviet.^[43] (When this happened there was a reversal of the relations between the soviet and the *skhod*, with the latter dominating the former politically, just as it often dominated it economically, by providing, for example, the salary of the secretary to the village soviet.)

The dominant role played by the traditional forms of organization had considerable ideological consequences. The system of practices to which the *skhod* gave support underlay the reproduction of a set of *contradictory ideological and political relations*. In particular, there were the ideas of village autonomy, of equality, and of solidarity within the *mir*.

(c) *The idea of village autonomy*

The fact that the *mir* and the *skhod* controlled lands, woods, smithies, mills, etc., gave rise to the illusory notion of *village autonomy*, of the village existing as *a world on its own*, sufficient unto itself.^[44]

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This idea erected serious *obstacles to intervention in village life by organizations outside the mir*. Thus, the tendency to subordination of the village soviet to the *skhod*, though politically overdetermined by the role of the well-to-do peasants in the *skhod*, was inherent in the ideology of the *mir*. It could be combated only by specific forms of class struggle.

At the same time, the idea of village "autonomy" produced *relative* indifference to the disparities in standard of living between town and country. These were seen as "two worlds," between which there was no common yardstick. Putting in the foreground the task of aligning the standards of living -- the material conditions of existence -- of these "two worlds" could easily be seen as signifying renunciation of the specific character of village life. The inequalities between town and country were looked upon, to a certain extent, as being the

inevitable counterpart of village "autonomy."

To be sure, this did not rule out the advancing of "economic demands," but these were not formulated in terms of "reducing gaps." The tendency for the differences between conditions in village and in town to increase did not, *in itself*, give rise during the NEP period to a struggle aimed at countering its effects. This needs to be taken into account when evaluating the factors which explain why this tendency was able to develop in that period without encountering large-scale resistance.

Finally, the idea of the autonomy of each village constituted an obstacle to any "alliance" between the peasants of several villages in order to fight for common aims. This aspect also contributed to creating a situation in which the growth of inequality between townspeople and countryside did not spontaneously engender struggles aimed at checking this differentiation.

In these circumstances, the struggle of the poor and middle peasants to improve their conditions by improving the terms of exchange remained weak. Paradoxically, the *relative* autonomy of the village, which was a reality, and the dependence of the towns upon the countryside, which was greater at that time than the dependence of the countryside upon the towns, did not, as a rule, appear as a "weapon" which the

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villagers could use in order to secure better conditions of exchange and a better supply of industrial goods.

The reproduction of the ideology of village autonomy thus played a negative role in relation to the attempt made by the Bolshevik Party to organize the struggle of the poor and middle peasants for better living conditions. Of course, this role was *only relative, not absolute*. Nevertheless, the idea of autonomy served as a vehicle for the idea of *development by relying on one's own resources* -- but the Bolshevik Party did not lay much stress on that.

To conclude discussion of this point, it is perhaps appropriate to justify use of the word "illusion" to characterize the idea of "village autonomy." It was indeed an illusion, for in the NEP period the village did depend on the town and urban activities for survival and economic development: it was dependent in respect to metals, part of its equipment, selected seeds (whose use was beginning to become widespread), and so on. However, this dependence was still fairly secondary in character, so that the illusion in question corresponded to a certain material and social reality, from which it drew its strength. And this illusion, if not effectively combated by the Party's political and ideological work, tended to block the path to a real alliance between the workers and the peasants, an alliance without which the poor and middle sections of the rural masses could not overthrow the dominance of the rich peasants.^[45]

(d) *The idea of equality within the mir*

One of the components of the peasant ideology as it was reproduced by the *skhod* was the idea that all peasants were "equal" within the *mir*. The material basis of this idea -- what underlay it -- was the periodical redivision of land carried out by the *skhod*.^[46]

However, this "equality" was, in fact, more of an illusion than it had ever been before. We have seen already that possession of means of production other than the land, and of financial resources, was a source of real inequalities, the ef-

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facts of which were intensified by the political inequalities that they engendered. Thus, at the head of the *mir* there usually stood members of rich or well-to-do families, and this was especially true of the headman, the *starosta*, or "elder," who played the leading role in the *skhod*. Given the division of the land without any corresponding redistribution of the instruments of labor, and given the wear and tear suffered by the most rudimentary of these instruments, the social and political power of the rich peasants was maintained and sometimes even increased.^[47]

The very way that the commune functioned served to assist the reproduction of egalitarian illusions. While the redistribution of land actually favored the rich peasants, it also enabled the group of middle peasants to grow stronger in accordance with the process of social differentiation characteristic of the NEP period.

Investigations carried out during this period showed that the *skhod* continued, mainly, to function as in prerevolutionary times -- its assemblies were usually convened and conducted by the same families as before, with the same men, or their descendants, in the role of *starosta*.^[48]

While the idea of equality within the *mir* was an illusion, the presence of this idea among the peasantry could have been used as a weapon by the Bolshevik Party to transform the *mir* and the *skhod* from within, by striving to ensure that the poor and middle peasants did in fact enjoy all the rights that they possessed in theory. Actually, however, examples of struggles along these lines are few and far between. The Party sought above all, and without much success, to breathe life into the rural soviets, for it saw the *mir* as an archaic institution doomed to wither away and incapable of serving as framework for revolutionary activity. This attitude was due partly to ideological reasons,^[49] but mainly to the circumstance that the Party's weak basis among the peasants made it harder for it to operate in the *skhod*, a purely peasant assembly, than in the soviets, where workers, peasants, and office workers were all represented together.

It needs to be added that very early the Bolshevik Party

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developed a tendency to treat with suspicion all "egalitarian" notions, doubtless through a one-sided interpretation of Marx's statements emphasizing the limits to the demand for equality and pointing out how the idea of "equal right" belonged within the limited setting of "bourgeois right."^[50] This one-sided interpretation was not unconnected with the ideological pressure exercised by the specialists, engineers, etc., who were paid high salaries. In the case under consideration, it led to an inability to draw petty-bourgeois notions into the wake of proletarian ideology and so to *transform them*.

(e) *The associated ideas of "independence of the farm" and "solidarity within the mir*

The ideology of the *skhod* and the *mir*, and the practices reproduced by these ideological organizations, nourished two ideas which were both contradictory and interconnected: the idea of the *independence of the farm assigned to a particular family* and that of *solidarity within the mir*.

The first idea was linked with the *division of the land* of the commune among *families*, which implied that a farm was an "independent" economic unit. It constituted the *material basis of the reproduction of the patriarchal family* and of its relations of domination and subordination, of the domination of the young by the old, for it was to *families -- and in practice to "heads of families" --* and not to individuals, that the divided-up land was assigned.

The idea of solidarity within the *mir* was materialized in the various obligations imposed upon the members of the land association and in the forms of "mutual aid" which they were expected to provide.

It was on the basis of this second idea, the ultimate expression of which would be a decision not to redivide the land but to form (as had been allowed for by the law of 1922) *agricultural communes*, for *joint cultivation* of the land, that a struggle for socialist forms of labor and production was possible within the *skhod*.

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There did exist, in fact, quite a few examples of development of collective forms of labor and production, under the impulsion of the poor and middle peasants, especially through some of the members of a commune *breaking away* in order to establish a *collective farm*.^[51]

On the whole, though, this movement took place in only a limited way. It was not until the end of 1927 that the Bolshevik Party really began to give it backing, and even then only hesitantly, because it did not result in the *large farms* which the Party favored, both for reasons of "principle" and because they lent themselves better to *mechanization*.

The Bolshevik Party failed to exploit seriously the contradictions characteristic of peasant ideology in the NEP period. It sought above all to work directly upon the contradiction which set the poor and middle peasants against the rich, but in this way it achieved only limited results. It allowed the traditional forms of organization to survive *de facto*, and when they broke up it was in only rare cases that this produced new collective forms.

On this basis "traditional" ideological centers continued to exist, in barely altered forms: the patriarchal family, the church, the religious sects. Similarly -- and this deserves special attention -- the Soviet school was transformed, becoming more and more openly bourgeois.

(f) *The Soviet school and the ideology of the school*

At the village level it was the primary school that was the main center for reproducing and transforming the ideology of the educational system. In the first years of Soviet power, this school was the subject of ambitious *projects* for revolutionary change.^[52] However, owing to lack of means, and also to resistance from the teachers, such projects had practically no impact on reality.

In 1923, two years after the beginning of the NEP, these projects, which had never materialized except in a few "pilot experiments," were put aside. In the words of Kalashnikov,

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author of a work on the sociology of education published in 1928: "the romanticism of the early years was channelled into the bed of practical achievements."^[53]

In other words, the exigencies of *reestablishing the economy* and of carrying out *the bourgeois-democratic revolution in the countryside* prevailed. While in the towns "reform" experiments went on in the kindergartens and the primary and secondary schools,^[54] what predominated in the rural areas (under the pressure of the rich and middle peasants, and of a section of the poor ones, too) was the return to "serious education," to a school of "social advancement based on selection and the ideology of competition (marks, examinations) . . . leading to the restoration of the school as reproducer of bourgeois ideology. . . ."^[55] This type of

school was what was wanted by the "Nepmen" and by most of the *cadres* of the economic and administrative apparatuses, and it also conformed to the ideology of the bulk of the teachers.

In the reproduction of the conservative ideas that dominated the village in the NEP period, the school that was returning to life^[56] played its part along with the family, the church, the *mir*, and the *skhod*, and even with the economic organizations that had been penetrated by elements that were carriers of bourgeois ideology.

The ideas that dominated the Soviet village at that time were not, of course, held by all the peasants (for a section of the middle and poor peasants adhered to the ideas of socialism, even if they did not join the Party), but nevertheless they did ensure, broadly, the "authority" of the rich and powerful among the peasants and "respect" for the social hierarchy of the village. The ground was, therefore, relatively favorable for the continued influence of petty-bourgeois ideas,^[57] since the Bolshevik Party, through failing to treat correctly the contradictions that existed among the peasantry, developed only very slowly its implantation in the countryside. Finally, from 1928 on, the Soviet government found itself confronted with contradictions which it could not cope with and which became exacerbated as a result of the specific form of industrialization to which the country was increasingly committed.

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Thereafter, the conditions were ripe for the explosion of the final crisis of the NEP. However, the factor which acted as the motive force in this crisis was not to be found among the peasantry: it was constituted by the contradictions in the towns and by the way in which these were met.

Notes

1. See volume I of the present work, especially pp. 355 ff. [p. 163]
2. Stalin, *Works*, vol. 7, p. 356. [*Transcriber's Note*: See Stalin's "[The Fourteenth Congress of the C.P.S.U.\(B.\)](#)". -- DJR] [p. 164]
3. *Ibid.*, vol. 7, pp. 356-357. [p. 165]
4. Carr and Davies, *Foundations*, vol. II, p. 481. [p. 165]
5. *Ibid.*, vol. II, p.481, and T. H. Rigby, *Communist Party Membership in the USSR, 1917-1967*, pp. 52, 162. Even if, instead of considering actual class situation, we take class origin as the criterion, we find that Party members of peasant origin made up no more than 20 percent of the total (see Rigby). [p. 165]
6. Rigby, *Communist Party Membership*, p. 189. [p. 165]
7. *K.P.S.S. v rezolyutsiyakh*, vol. 2, p. 489. [p. 165]
8. *Communist Party Membership*, p. 170. [p. 166]
9. A. Gaister and A. Levin, article on the composition of the Party's rural organizations in *Bolshevik*, nos. 9-10 (1929), pp. 75-90, and Rigby, *Communist Party Membership*, pp. 170, 171. [p. 166]
10. Rigby, *Communist Party Membership*, p. 181. [p. 166]
11. *K.P.S.S. v rezolyutsiyakh*, vol. 2, pp. 489-490. [p. 166]

- In the Smolensk archives (which fell into the hands of the German forces and then were taken over by the American army and transferred to the United States, where they were made available to researchers: National Archives Microfilm Publication no. T-87, National Archives, Washington, D.C.), we find much information about the working of the Party in the country and town, and about the various problems that arose in the Smolensk region between 1917 and 1941. In particular, there are results of investigations, and reports, which show what the situation was in the

Bolshevik Party during the NEP period. Merle Fainsod reproduces a small part of this documentation in *Smolensk Under Soviet Rule*: on what is said here see pp. 139 ff. [p. 167]

13. Taking the Party as a whole, the statistics of the purges of 1929-1930 show that the most frequent reason given for expulsion,

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accounting for 22 percent of cases, was "defects in private life and behaviour," while 17 percent of those expelled suffered this fate owing to their "passivity," and 17 percent because they were "hostile elements or connected with such." "Criminal conduct" was the trouble in 12 percent of cases, and "violation of Party discipline" in another 12 percent. For 22 percent of cases the reasons for expulsion were not specified (Rigby, *Communist Party Membership*, p. 180). [p. 167]

14. Stalin, *Works*, vol. 6, pp. 327 ff. [Transcriber's Note: See Stalin's "[The Party's Tasks in the Countryside](#)". -- DJR] [p. 167]
15. At that time many of these organizations were not led by Party members, and it sometimes happened that they supported views or demands that the Party did not approve of. [p. 168]
16. Stalin, *Works*, vol. 6, pp. 333-334. [p. 168]
17. Ibid., vol. 6, pp. 315 ff. [Transcriber's Note: See Stalin's "[The Party's Immediate Tasks in the Countryside](#)". -- DJR] [p. 168]
18. Ibid., vol. 6, p. 322. [p. 168]
19. Ibid., vol. 6, pp. 324-325. [p. 168]
20. See the resolution on "Immediate Tasks of Work in the Rural Areas" adopted by the plenum of October 25-27, 1924, in *K.P.S.S. v rezolyutsiyakh*, vol. I, pp. 906 ff. [p. 168]
21. Stalin, *Works*, vol. 7, p. 127. [Transcriber's Note: See Stalin's "[The Results of the Work of the Fourteenth Conference of the R.C.P.\(B.\)](#)". -- DJR] [p. 169]
22. Ibid., vol. 7, p. 129. [p. 169]
23. "Iz istorii partiinogo stroitelstva," in *Partiinaya Zhizn*, no. 20 (1957), pp. 80-96, quoted by O. Narkiewicz, *The Making of the Soviet State Apparatus*, pp. 69; 76, n. 16. [p. 169]
24. See above, pp. 175 ff. [p. 170]
25. Stalin, *Works*, vol. 7, pp. 185-186. [Transcriber's Note: See Stalin's "[Questions and Answers](#)". -- DJR] [p. 171]
26. Ibid., vol. 7, p. 186. [p. 171]
27. Narkiewicz, *Making*, p. 72. [p. 171]
28. I. Bogovoi, "Perevybory sovyetov v derevne i rasshirenii demokratii," in *Bolshevik*, nos. 9-10 (1926), pp. 38-44, quoted in Narkiewicz, *Making*, pp. 71-72. [p. 171]
29. Stalin, *Works*, vol. 7, p. 193. [p. 171]
30. Ibid., vol. 7, p. 179. [p. 171]
31. Quoted in Carr and Davies, *Foundations*, vol. 2, p. 220. [p. 172]
32. Carr and Davies, *Foundations*, vol. 2, p. 250. On the *mir*, see volume I of the present work, pp.78, 85, 213 ff., 236 ff., 440, 517. [p. 172]
33. Carr and Davies, *Foundations*, vol. 2, pp. 250-251. [p. 172]
34. Stalin, *Works*, vol. 6, p. 323. [Transcriber's Note: See Stalin's "[The Party's Immediate Tasks in the Countryside](#)". -- DJR] [p. 174]
35. The waters and woods, having been nationalized, belonged legally to the state, but the land associations continued to dispose of them, as they did also of the property of the former landown-

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ers. The cultivated lands were assigned by the land associations to the

families that worked them. The woods and uncultivated lands were not distributed but made freely available for use, subject to rules laid down by the *skhod*. [p. 175]

36. See notes 3 to 7, p. 244, of Carr and Davies, *Foundations*, vol. 2. [p. 175]
37. *Ibid.*, p. 346. [p. 175]
38. M. Rezunov, *Selskie sovyety i zemelnye obshchestva*, pp. 33-34; Carr and Davies, *Foundations*, vol. 2, p. 247. [p. 176]
39. *XV-y Syezd VKP(b)*, vol. 2 (1962), p. 1281; and Carr and Davies, *Foundations*, vol. 2, p. 255. [p. 176]
40. *K.P.S.S. v rezolyutsiyakh*, vol. 2, pp. 366-367. [p. 176]
41. *XIV-y Vserossiisky Syezd Sovyetov*, no. 15 (1929), p. 14; and Carr and Davies, *Foundations*, vol. 2, p. 247. [p. 176]
42. It will be observed that, four years after Stalin had issued the call, the slogan of strengthening the financial resources of the rural soviets had remained almost without effect. In May 1929 the Fourteenth All-Russia Congress of Soviets was still asking for these rural soviets to be provided with a budgetary system (Carr and Davies, *Foundations*, vol. 2, p. 258). [p. 176]
43. *Ibid.*, p. 247, n. 8, quoting *Sovetskoye Stroitelstvo*, no. 12 (29) (December 1928), p. 100. [p. 176]
44. The word *mir*, meaning the village community, although its etymology is not the same as that of *mir* meaning "the world," calls the latter to mind, and these two words were frequently confused. [p. 176]
45. Lenin laid stress on this idea, especially in the preparations for the Second Congress of the Communist International (see "[Preliminary Draft Theses on the Agrarian Question, for the Second Comintern Congress](#)," in Lenin, *CW*, vol. 31, pp. 152-164). [p. 178]
46. On the legal foundations of the *skhod*'s activity, see volume I of the present work. [p. 178]
47. Y. Taniuchi, *The Village Gathering in Russia in the Mid-1920s*, especially pp. 21-22; and Narkiewicz, *Making*, p. 125. [p. 179]
48. Taniuchi, *Village*, p. 27; and S. Zhdanovich, "Selskiye sovyety: zemelnye obshchestva," in *Bolshevik*, no. 6 (1928). [p. 179]
49. See volume I of the present work, particularly pp. 214-215. [p. 179]
50. Marx, "[Critique of the Gotha Programme](#)," in Marx and Engels, *Selected Works in Three Volumes*, vol. 2, p. 18. [p. 180]
51. See Zhdanovich, "Selskiye sovyety," and Narkiewicz, *Making*, p. 127; also above, p. 100. [p. 181]
52. See volume I of the present work, pp. 168-169. [p. 181]

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53. Quoted in D. Lindenbergh, *L'Internationale communiste et l'école de classe*, p. 293. [p. 182]
54. In those days there was no hesitation in borrowing pedagogical doctrines from Dewey, Decroly, and Kerschensteiner, whose disciples in the Soviet Union were also inspired by the experiments of the Social Democrats in Germany (*ibid.*, p. 295). [p. 182]
55. *Ibid.*, p. 295. [p. 182]
56. In 1928 and 1929, in connection with the offensive against the kulaks and the slogan of "cultural revolution" that was issued at that time, the NEP-period type of school came under vigorous criticism. Resolutions condemning it were even passed. But these condemnations remained on paper from 1930-1931 on the *tasks of "economic construction"* carried the day, and even the pedagogical experiments were soon abandoned. There was a return to the most traditional of bourgeois forms in the educational sphere. [p. 182]
57. Even as late as 1926, in certain regions, such as Smolensk, posters were clandestinely stuck up which appear to have been inspired by socialist-

revolutionary ideas, although the general attitude of the peasants toward the Soviet government was regarded as being "good" (Fainsod, *Smolensk*, p. 123, quoting the Smolensk Archives: VKP 249, p. 203). [p. [182](#)]

From Marx to Mao	Other Documents	Reading Guide	On to Section 3: Part 3, sec. 1, 2 and 3
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